

## Statement on Indonesia's Ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty *December 6, 2011*

The United States welcomes Indonesia's ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which provides a strong example of the positive leadership role Indonesia can play in the global effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a critical element of the international effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and I urge all states to sign and ratify

the agreement so that it can be brought into force at the earliest possible date. The United States remains fully committed to pursuing ratification of the Test Ban Treaty and will continue to engage Members of the Senate on the importance of this treaty to U.S. security. America must lead the global effort to prevent proliferation, and adoption and early entry into force of the CTBT is a vital part of that effort.

## Statement on Senate Action To Block the Nomination of Caitlin J. Halligan To Be a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit *December 6, 2011*

I am deeply disappointed that a minority of the United States Senate has blocked the nomination of Caitlin Halligan to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Ms. Halligan has the experience, integrity, and judgment to serve with distinction on this court, and she has broad bipartisan support from the legal and law enforcement communities. But today her nomination fell victim to the Republican pattern of obstructionism that puts party ahead of country. Today's vote dramatically lowers the bar used to justify a filibuster, which had required extraordinary circumstances. The only extraordinary things about Ms. Halligan are her qualifications and her intellect.

Currently, Senate Republicans are blocking 20 other highly qualified judicial nominees, half of whom I have nominated to fill vacancies deemed judicial emergencies by the Administrative Office of the Courts. These are distinguished nominees who historically would be confirmed without delay. All of them have already been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee, most of them unanimously, only to run into partisan roadblocks on the Senate floor. The American people deserve a fair and functioning judiciary. So I urge Senate Republicans to end this pattern of partisan obstructionism and confirm Ms. Halligan and the other judges they have blocked for purely partisan reasons.

## Memorandum on International Initiatives To Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons *December 6, 2011*

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies*

*Subject:* International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons

The struggle to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons is a global challenge, and one that is

central to the United States commitment to promoting human rights. I am deeply concerned by the violence and discrimination targeting LGBT persons around the world—whether it is passing laws that criminalize LGBT status, beating citizens simply for joining peaceful LGBT pride celebrations, or killing men, women, and children for their perceived sexual orientation. That is why I de-

clared before heads of state gathered at the United Nations, “no country should deny people their rights because of who they love, which is why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere.” Under my Administration, agencies engaged abroad have already begun taking action to promote the fundamental human rights of LGBT persons everywhere. Our deep commitment to advancing the human rights of all people is strengthened when we as the United States bring our tools to bear to vigorously advance this goal.

By this memorandum I am directing all agencies engaged abroad to ensure that U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons. Specifically, I direct the following actions, consistent with applicable law:

*Section 1. Combating Criminalization of LGBT Status or Conduct Abroad.* Agencies engaged abroad are directed to strengthen existing efforts to effectively combat the criminalization by foreign governments of LGBT status or conduct and to expand efforts to combat discrimination, homophobia, and intolerance on the basis of LGBT status or conduct.

*Sec. 2. Protecting Vulnerable LGBT Refugees and Asylum Seekers.* Those LGBT persons who seek refuge from violence and persecution face daunting challenges. In order to improve protection for LGBT refugees and asylum seekers at all stages of displacement, the Departments of State and Homeland Security shall enhance their ongoing efforts to ensure that LGBT refugees and asylum seekers have equal access to protection and assistance, particularly in countries of first asylum. In addition, the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security shall ensure appropriate training is in place so that relevant Federal Government personnel and key partners can effectively address the protection of LGBT refugees and asylum seekers, including by providing to them adequate assistance and ensuring that the Federal Government has the ability to identify and expedite resettlement of highly vulnerable persons with urgent protection needs.

*Sec. 3. Foreign Assistance to Protect Human Rights and Advance Nondiscrimination.* Agencies involved with foreign aid, assistance, and development shall enhance their ongoing efforts to ensure regular Federal Government engagement with governments, citizens, civil society, and the private sector in order to build respect for the human rights of LGBT persons.

*Sec. 4. Swift and Meaningful U.S. Responses to Human Rights Abuses of LGBT Persons Abroad.* The Department of State shall lead a standing group, with appropriate interagency representation, to help ensure the Federal Government’s swift and meaningful response to serious incidents that threaten the human rights of LGBT persons abroad.

*Sec. 5. Engaging International Organizations in the Fight Against LGBT Discrimination.* Multilateral fora and international organizations are key vehicles to promote respect for the human rights of LGBT persons and to bring global attention to LGBT issues. Building on the State Department’s leadership in this area, agencies engaged abroad should strengthen the work they have begun and initiate additional efforts in these multilateral fora and organizations to: counter discrimination on the basis of LGBT status; broaden the number of countries willing to support and defend LGBT issues in the multilateral arena; strengthen the role of civil society advocates on behalf of LGBT issues within and through multilateral fora; and strengthen the policies and programming of multilateral institutions on LGBT issues.

*Sec. 6. Reporting on Progress.* All agencies engaged abroad shall prepare a report within 180 days of the date of this memorandum, and annually thereafter, on their progress toward advancing these initiatives. All such agencies shall submit their reports to the Department of State, which will compile a report on the Federal Government’s progress in advancing these initiatives for transmittal to the President.

*Sec. 7. Definitions.* (a) For the purposes of this memorandum, agencies engaged abroad include the Departments of State, the Treasury,

Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Export-Import Bank, the United States Trade Representative, and such other agencies as the President may designate.

(b) For the purposes of this memorandum, agencies involved with foreign aid, assistance, and development include the Departments of State, the Treasury, Defense, Justice, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security, the USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Export-Import Bank, the United States Trade Representative, and such

other agencies as the President may designate.

This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

The Secretary of State is hereby authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This memorandum was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada

December 7, 2011

*President Obama.* Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

I am very pleased to welcome my friend and partner, Prime Minister Harper, back to the White House. Whenever we get together, it's a chance to reaffirm the enduring alliance between our nations, the extraordinary bonds between our peoples, the excellent cooperation between our governments, and my close personal friendship to the Prime Minister.

Stephen, I believe this is the 11th time that we've sat down and worked together, not including our many summits around the world. And on occasions like this, unfortunately, I only speak one language; Stephen moves effortlessly between two. But no matter what language we speak, we always understand each other. In Stephen, I've got a trusted partner, and I think he'll agree that perhaps no two nations match up more closely together or are woven together more deeply, economically, culturally, than the United States and Canada.

And that deep sense of interconnection, our shared values, our shared interests, infused the work that we have done today, from supporting a resolution to the euro zone crisis to moving ahead with the transition in Afghanistan, from

deepening security cooperation here in the Americas to supporting reform and democratic transitions in the Middle East and North Africa.

Our focus today, however, is on our highest priority and my top priority as President, and that's creating jobs faster and growing the economy faster. And in this mission, Canada has a special role to play. As most of you know, Canada is our single largest trading partner, our top export market, and those exports—from cars to food—support some 1.7 million good-paying American jobs. Canada, in turn, is one of the top foreign investors in the United States, and that creates even more jobs and prosperity.

And the Prime Minister and I are determined not just to sustain this trade, but to expand it, to grow it even faster, so we're creating even more jobs and more opportunity for our people. Canada is key to achieving my goal of doubling American exports and putting folks back to work. And the two important initiatives that we agreed to today will help us do just that.

First, we're agreeing to a series of concrete steps to bring our economies even closer and