

I'm going to accept. And I don't expect to have to veto it because I expect they're going to have enough sense over on Capitol Hill to do the people's business and not try to load it up with a bunch of politics.

Prime Minister Harper. I have Lee-Anne Goodman, Canadian Press.

Border Security

Q. Hi, there. Prime Minister, will Canada warn Americans about visitors to Canada from suspect countries like Pakistan, even if they have no intention of coming to the U.S. under this new agreement?

And, Mr. President, do you want to be warned? Do you want that kind of information? And *en français, s'il vous plait aussi*, Mr. Harper.

[*Prime Minister Harper responded in English as follows and then translated his remarks into French.*]

Prime Minister Harper. We do—I think, as you know, our two countries cooperate on international security issues very closely and very regularly. That cooperation, at the same time, is governed by agreements and defined protocols, and those will remain in effect.

President Obama. I don't think I can expand any more on that. [Laughter] Far more eloquent than I could ever express it. Okay?

Thank you so much, everybody.

Prime Minister Harper. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:16 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, Prime Minister Harper referred to Associate Deputy Minister of Environment Bob Hamilton and Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet for Plans and Consultations Simon Kennedy of Canada.

Statement on National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day December 7, 2011

Seventy years ago today, a bright Sunday morning was darkened by the unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor. Today Michelle and I join the American people in honoring the memory of the more than 2,400 American patriots—military and civilian; men, women, and children—who gave their lives in our first battle of the Second World War. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families for whom this day is deeply personal—the spouses, brothers and sisters, and sons and daughters—who have known seven decades without a loved one, but who have kept their legacy alive for future generations.

We salute the veterans and survivors of Pearl Harbor who inspire us still. Despite overwhelming odds, they fought back heroically, inspiring our Nation and putting us on the path to victory. They are members of that greatest generation who overcame the Depression, crossed oceans and stormed the beaches to defeat fascism, and turned adversaries into our

closest allies. When the guns fell silent, they came home, went to school on the GI bill, and built the largest middle class in history and the strongest economy in the world. They remind us that no challenge is too great when Americans stand as one. All of us owe these men and women a profound debt of gratitude for the freedoms and standard of living we enjoy today.

On this National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, we also reaffirm our commitment to carrying on their work, to keeping the country we love strong, free, and prosperous. And as today's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan come to an end and we welcome home our 9/11 generation, we resolve to always take care of our troops, veterans, and military families as well as they've taken care of us. On this solemn anniversary, there can be no higher tribute to the Americans who served and sacrificed 70 years ago today.

Remarks on Senate Action To Block the Nomination of Richard A. Cordray To Be Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and an Exchange With Reporters

December 8, 2011

The President. Good morning, everybody. A couple of days ago I said that we are in a make-or-break moment when it comes to America's middle class. We either have a country where everybody fends for themselves, or we create a country where everybody does their fair share, everybody has got a fair chance, and we ensure that there's fair play out there.

Now, to ensure fair play, one of the things that I talked about was the importance of making sure we implement financial reform, Wall Street reform that was passed last year. And a key component of that was making sure that we have a consumer watchdog in place who can police what mortgage brokers and payday lenders and other nonbank financial entities are able to do when it comes to consumers.

This is a big deal. About one in five people use these kinds of mechanisms to finance everything from buying a house to cashing their checks. And we passed a law last year that said we need this consumer watchdog in place to make sure that people aren't taken advantage of.

Now, we have nominated somebody—Richard Cordray, former attorney general and treasurer of Ohio—who everybody says is highly qualified. The majority of attorney generals, Republican and Democrat, from across the country have said this is somebody who can do the job with integrity, who has a tradition of being a bipartisan individual who looks out for the public interest, and is ready to go. And he actually helped set up the consumer finance protection board.

This morning Senate Republicans blocked his nomination, refusing to let the Senate even go forward with an up-or-down vote on Mr. Cordray. This makes absolutely no sense.

Consumers across the country understand that part of the reason we got into the financial mess that we did was because regulators were not doing their jobs. People were not paying attention to what was happening in the housing

market; people weren't paying attention to who was being taken advantage of. There were folks who were making a lot of money taking advantage of American consumers.

This individual's job is to make sure that individual consumers are protected, everybody from seniors to young people who are looking for student loans to members of our Armed Services, who are probably more vulnerable than just about anybody when it comes to unscrupulous financial practices.

There is no reason why Mr. Cordray should not be nominated and should not be confirmed by the Senate and should not be doing his job right away in order to carry out his mandate and his mission.

So I just want to send a message to the Senate: We are not giving up on this. We are going to keep on going at it. We are not going to allow politics as usual on Capitol Hill to stand in the way of American consumers being protected by unscrupulous financial operators. And we're going to keep on pushing on this issue.

Payroll Tax Cut/Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Now, the second thing I want to make clear about is that, with respect to the payroll tax—you guys have all seen our countdown clock behind us. This is about doing—making sure that everybody is doing their fair share and that the middle class does not see their taxes go up by a thousand dollars in 23 days.

And we've heard recently some intimations from the Senate majority leader and from the Speaker of the House—or the Senate minority leader and the Speaker of the House—that they think we should do a payroll tax, but the question is what price will they extract from the President in order to get it done.

And I just want to make clear: This is not about me. They shouldn't extend the payroll tax cut for me. They shouldn't extend unemployment insurance for me. This is for 160