

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders November 16, 2012

The President. Well, I want to welcome the congressional leadership here and thank them for their time. I think we're all aware that we have some urgent business to do. We've got to make sure that taxes don't go up on middle class families, that our economy remains strong, that we're creating jobs. And that's an agenda that Democrats and Republicans and Independents, people all across the country, share.

So our challenge is to make sure that we are able to cooperate together, work together, find some common ground, make some tough compromises, build some consensus, to do the people's business. And what folks are looking for, and I think all of us agree on this, is action. They want to see that we are focused on them, not focused on our politics here in Washington.

So my hope is, is that this is going to be the beginning of a fruitful process where we're able to come to an agreement that will reduce our deficit in a balanced way, that we will deal with some of these long-term impediments to growth, and we're also going to be focusing on

making sure that middle class families are able to get ahead.

So I want to thank all the leadership for coming. And with that, we're going to get to work.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

Oh, wait, wait, excuse me. There's actually one other point that I wanted to make, and that is that my understanding is tomorrow is Speaker Boehner's birthday. So for those of you who want to wish him a happy birthday, we will—we're not going to embarrass him with a cake because we didn't know how many candles were needed—[laughter]—but—

Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner. Yeah, right. [Laughter]

The President. But we do want to wish him a happy birthday.

Speaker Boehner. Thank you. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

The President's Weekly Address November 17, 2012

Hi, everybody.

Four years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our economy is growing again and creating jobs. But we have much more to do. Our task now is to build on that progress, because this Nation only succeeds when we've got a growing, thriving middle class.

That's what drives me. That's what I campaigned on for the past year. That's what will guide me in our work over the next 4 years. And I'm willing to work with anyone of any party to move this country forward.

Because soon, we face a very clear deadline that requires us to make some big decisions on jobs and taxes, on investments and deficits. Both parties voted to set this deadline, and I believe both parties can work together to make

these decisions in a balanced and responsible way.

When it comes to taxes, for example, there are two paths available. One says, if Congress fails to act by the end of the year, then everybody's taxes automatically go up, including the 98 percent of Americans who make less than \$250,000 a year. Our economy just can't afford that right now, you can't afford that right now, and nobody wants that to happen.

The other path is for Congress to pass a law right away to prevent a tax hike on the first \$250,000 of anyone's income. That means all Americans, including the wealthiest Americans, get a tax cut and 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of all small-business owners won't see their income taxes go up a single

dime. The Senate's already passed a bill like this. Democrats in the House are ready to pass one too. All we need is for Republicans in the House to come onboard.

We shouldn't hold the middle class hostage while Congress debates tax cuts for the wealthy. Let's begin our work by actually doing what we all agree on. Let's keep taxes low for the middle class. And let's get it done soon so we can give families and businesses some good news going into the holiday season.

I know these challenges won't be easy to solve, but we can do it if we work together. That's why on Friday I sat down with Congressional leaders to discuss how we can reduce our deficit in a way that strengthens our economy and protects our middle class. It was a constructive meeting. And everyone agreed that while we may have our differences, we need to come together, find solutions, and take action as soon as possible.

Because if anything, that's the message I heard loud and clear in this election. Work as hard as you can to make our lives better, and do it together. Don't worry about the politics. Just get it done.

Everywhere I went during the campaign, from the farms of Iowa to the Vegas strip, from Colorado's Rockies to the Florida coast, I was inspired by the grit and resilience of the American people, by your hard work and sense of decency. And it makes me want to work even harder for you. I saw it again this week in New York, where our fellow citizens are going through a really tough time, but are helping each other through it. And we're going to be there to help them rebuild.

Every single day, the good people of this country work as hard as you can to meet your responsibilities. Those of us that you send to Washington have to do the same.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:35 p.m. on November 16 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on November 17. In the address, the President referred to S. 3412. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 17.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Yinglax Chinnawat of Thailand

November 18, 2012

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra of Thailand and President Barack Obama of the United States of America met today at the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, on the eve of the anniversary of 180 years of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the United States of America to chart the way for a deeper bilateral strategic partnership and enhanced regional cooperation.

The President expressed his appreciation for his audience with His Majesty the King of Thailand and conveyed his warmest wishes to Their Majesties the King and Queen and the Royal Family. He further reaffirmed the enduring U.S. support for democracy in Thailand and welcomed the Royal Thai Government's commitment to strengthen Thailand's parlia-

mentary democracy. He emphasized that Thailand is America's oldest treaty ally in Asia, and the two leaders agreed that this alliance is rooted in the shared commitment to democracy, rule of law, universal human rights, open societies, and a free market, which has bonded the people of the two nations closely together. Prime Minister Yingluck added that the 180 years of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the United States, first established by the 1833 Treaty of Amity and Commerce, is a partnership that has not only stood the test of time and proved beneficial to the two countries, but also has meaningfully contributed to the promotion of stability, prosperity, and the creation of jobs between both partners and the South-east Asian region as a whole.