

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 Yingluck 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.

The two leaders welcomed the continuous high-level and multidimensional dialogue between Thailand and the United States, including the 4th United States-Thailand Strategic Dialogue in June 2012, Prime Minister Yingluck's recent visit to the United States in September 2012 to attend the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the 2d United States-Thailand Strategic Defense Talks in October 2012, and the visit of the United States Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to Bangkok on November 15, 2012.

Both sides agreed that these high-level dialogues are instrumental to the success of the multidimensional partnership between Thailand and the United States, which is reflected in the depth and diversity of cooperation on political, security, economic, technical, social and cultural, science and technology, and development issues. They highlighted the United States-Thailand Strategic Dialogue as the critical framework to shape the agenda for United States-Thailand relations, and welcomed the results of the 2d United States-Thai Defense Strategic Talks, which ensured that bilateral defense cooperation complements existing cooperation in the political, economic and social development fields. In this connection, the two leaders further agreed that a Strategic Dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense of Thailand and the Department of State and the Department of Defense of the United States would provide a forum for enhancing partnership between the two countries.

The two leaders highlighted the Thailand-United States Creative Partnership, which connects universities, businesses, and other innovation sectors in both countries as a prime example of forward-looking cooperation between the two nations and a forum to expand new areas of cooperation. The Prime Minister stated that Thailand continues to welcome educational and people-to-people exchanges through various channels such as the Fulbright Scholarship Program and the Peace Corps, with the latter celebrating its 50th anniversary in Thailand this year.

The two leaders agreed that the upcoming 180th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations is a timely opportunity to reinvigorate the United States-Thailand partnership to truly realize its strategic potential. The President expressed his appreciation for Thailand's ongoing efforts to promote regional peace and prosperity, including through regional development projects, while the Prime Minister welcomed the constructive role of the United States in the region. Both sides agreed that comprehensive and multidimensional engagement with the region by the United States could help to further enhance peace, prosperity, sustainable development and people-to-people relations.

On defense cooperation, they welcomed achievements made through the annual Cobra Gold exercise, which now involves participants and observers from 27 countries, Thailand's international peacekeeping operations in Darfur, and counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. President Obama looked forward to Thailand's co-hosting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise with the Republic of Korea in 2013.

Prime Minister Yingluck welcomed the United States' policy of forging a stronger partnership with the Asia-Pacific region and the support of the United States for ASEAN's centrality in the region's development and integration, especially through the United States' engagement at the ASEAN-U.S. Summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS). President Obama noted the growing importance of the EAS as an important regional forum for Asia-Pacific leaders to discuss political and strategic issues. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working together to promote practical regional cooperation, including through other regional multilateral organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

The two leaders acknowledged the importance of forging regional cooperation based on mutual respect, and of resolving disputes peacefully and in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law. The two leaders noted progress achieved on a

dialogue towards a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea under Thailand's coordinatorship of the ASEAN-China framework. The Prime Minister commended the United States' substantive engagement in the Lower Mekong Initiative, while the President reiterated continued U.S. support for the development of the Mekong sub-region, and in particular emphasized support for women's empowerment as a pillar of the Lower Mekong Initiative. The two leaders welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Trilateral Cooperation between the United States Agency for International Development and the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency to support human resources development in countries in the region.

The two leaders agreed that non-traditional challenges would require close cooperation between Thailand and the United States in addressing issues such as nuclear security, climate change, disaster relief, and wildlife trafficking, which have become of global concern. The leaders welcomed the outcomes of the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, and pledged to continue working together to address nuclear threats, including through their participation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In this regard, the President congratulated Thailand's announcement endorsing the Proliferation Security Initiative's Principles of Interdiction.

President Obama and Prime Minister Yingluck agreed to strengthen joint efforts to combat transnational crimes, such as through anti-human trafficking, counternarcotics, and efforts to better secure borders, airports, and seaports. President Obama and Prime Minister Yingluck highlighted the importance of the joint partnership on public health, and the ongoing work to develop new vaccines for HIV

and dengue fever as well as protection against pandemic threats like avian influenza and cooperation in combating multi-drug resistant malaria. Both leaders agreed that the partnership between Thailand and the United States would facilitate cooperation to overcome these transboundary challenges at both regional and global levels.

The President acknowledged Thailand's role as a regional hub for ASEAN Connectivity and supported Thailand's critical role in the realization of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The two leaders welcomed plans to convene the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Joint Council, which serves as a foundation for economic cooperation in this partnership. In this context, the two leaders agreed jointly to promote region-wide trade and investment, sustainable human development, economic opportunity for women, and people-to-people connectivity, including through the U.S.-ASEAN Five Year Work Plan. President Obama welcomed Thailand's interest in the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which will be subject to Thailand's undertaking of the necessary domestic procedures. The two leaders looked forward to reconvening the TIFA Joint Council as an important step to strengthen our trade ties and consult on the requirements for Thailand's eventual participation in high-standard agreements, including the TPP.

Prime Minister Yingluck and President Obama agreed to continue the exchange of high-level visits between Thailand and the United States in order to sustain momentum and progress in the multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yinglak Chinnawat of Thailand in Bangkok, Thailand November 18, 2012

Prime Minister Yinglak. Ladies and gentlemen of the media, let me start by once again

welcoming President Barack Obama and his delegation to Thailand.