

And I find that this is an opportunity we only have every 12 years. We're practically beginning our administration, same that you'll be starting your next 4-year term, I will be starting a 6-year administration in Mexico, as you well know, and I think this is really a great opportunity for all of us to have a closer link of brotherhood, of sisterhood, of collaboration, and of course, of great accomplishments we might both have working together.

Yes, and I believe that we have very important tasks before us that are common, as a matter of fact. For instance, we have many common things: we were both Congressmen—legislators, as we say in Spanish—in our respective Congresses in our own countries. And this means we're very sensitive to the needs of our peoples. And we also share a very important vision; the vision, for instance, of creating more jobs. We know this is very important, not only for the American people, but also for the Mexican people, for both of our nations. These are two very important demands in our countries.

And we do have the opportunity to grow, but not only that; we also have the opportunity to integrate North America, to be participating in this part of the world. And I am so pleased that this is the situation we're in.

And of course, as I've said, to increase the integration of North America, to really take advantage of the open spaces we have for our work, and not only in this part of the world, but also with Asia, of course, and just mentioning, for instance, the TPP, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. And my Government is of course very much interested in strengthening this because we believe that this is going to be a great opportunity for all of us.

Yes, and of course, in terms of security, that's another major challenge we all face. My Government has set out to reduce the violence situation in our country. And for that, of

course, we have set out to launch a strategy for this purpose. And I will do everything we can for this. We want to have—we have the will to have cooperation, efficient cooperation, with respect, respect for our sovereign states. And of course, in terms of the border, we want our border to be a safe, modern, connected border, legal border. That's exactly what we've set out to accomplish.

Yes, and in terms of the reform for migration, the migration reform, we do have to tell you that we fully support your proposal, sir, and—for this migration reform. More than demanding what you should do or shouldn't do, we do want to tell you that we want to contribute. We really want to participate with you. We want to contribute towards the accomplishment so that of course we can participate in the betterment and the well-being of so many millions of people who live in your country and who are also participating. So we want to be part of this.

And I trust that we'll be able to have a very close relationship in our work, Mr. President. And that—and of course, I want to invite you to come to Mexico, to make a state visit. And as you know, next year in 2013, we're going to be holding the North American Summit, the leaders' summit. And you're of course invited. And we really hope to see you there. We'll be waiting for you with open arms.

President Obama. Any excuse to go to Mexico, I'm always game. In fact, I'm jealous of Joe Biden. [*Laughter*] But anyway, thank you very much. Welcome. Thank you, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President-elect Peña Nieto spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the 100th Anniversary of Albania's Independence November 27, 2012

On behalf of the people of the United States, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to the people of Albania on the occa-

sion of the 100th anniversary of your country's independence. At this historic milestone, Albania—already a close ally—stands poised to fur-

ther consolidate its democracy, grow its economy, and to continue the reforms necessary to take its rightful place in Europe.

The strong ties between the United States and Albania date from Albania's first years of independence. They were restored and reinvigorated as Albania emerged from communism and committed itself to building a modern, democratic state, firmly anchored in the Euro-Atlantic community. The partnership between our countries has been strengthened by

the close connection between our peoples, and American society has been enriched by the contributions of generations of Albanian Americans. As Secretary Clinton said in her historic remarks before the Albanian Parliament, the United States stood with the people of Albania for the first 100 years of their country's independence and will stand with you for the next hundred years and the hundred years that follow. On this important occasion, we join you in celebrating your country's bright future.

Remarks on the National Economy November 28, 2012

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Everybody, please have a seat, except you guys. Don't sit down. [*Laughter*]

Well, good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. You know, there's been a lot of talk here in Washington about the deadlines we're facing on taxes and deficits. These deadlines are going to be coming up very soon in the coming weeks. But today is important because I want to make sure everybody understands this debate is not just about numbers. It's a set of major decisions that are going to affect millions of families all across this country in very significant ways. And their voices—the voices of the American people—have to be part of this debate. And so I asked some friends of mine here to join me, some folks from here in the area.

Our ultimate goal is an agreement that gets our long-term deficit under control in a way that is fair and balanced. That kind of agreement would be good for our businesses; it would be good for our economy; it would be good for our children's future. And I believe that both parties can agree on a framework that does that in the coming weeks. In fact, my hope is to get this done before Christmas.

But the place where we already have, in theory at least, complete agreement right now is on middle class taxes. And as I've said before, we've got two choices. If Congress does nothing, every family in America will see their taxes automatically go up at the beginning of next

year. Starting January 1, every family in America will see their taxes go up.

A typical middle class family of four would see its income taxes go up by \$2,200. That's \$2,200 out of people's pockets. That means less money for buying groceries, less money for filling prescriptions, less money for buying diapers. [*Laughter*] It means a tougher choice between paying the rent and paying tuition. And middle class families just can't afford that right now.

By the way, businesses can't afford it either. Yesterday I sat down with some small-business owners who stressed this point. Economists predict that if taxes go up on the middle class next year, consumers will spend nearly \$200 billion less on things like cars and clothes and furniture, and that obviously means fewer customers. That cuts into business profits. That makes businesses less likely to invest and hire, which means fewer jobs, and that can drag our entire economy down.

Now, the good news is there's a better option. Right now, as we speak, Congress can pass a law that would prevent a tax hike on the first \$250,000 of everybody's income—everybody's. And that means that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up by a single dime. Ninety-eight percent of Americans, 97 percent of small businesses, would not see their income taxes go up by a single dime.

Even the wealthiest Americans would still get a tax cut on the first \$250,000 of their