

“My2K.” We figured that would make it a little easier to remember.

And I want to assure the American people I’m doing my part: I’m sitting down with CEOs; I’m sitting down with labor leaders; I’m talking to leaders in Congress. I am ready and able and willing and excited to go ahead and get this issue resolved in a bipartisan fashion so that American families, American businesses have some certainty going into next year. And we can do it in a balanced and fair way, but our first job is to make sure that taxes on middle class families don’t go up. And since we all theoretically agree on that, we should go ahead and get that done. If we get that done, a lot of the other stuff is going to be a lot easier.

So in light of just, sort of, spreading this message, I’m going to be visiting Pennsylvania on Friday to talk with folks at a small business there that are trying to make sure that they’re filling their Christmas orders. And I’ll go anywhere, and I’ll do whatever it takes to get this done. It’s too important for Washington to screw this up. Now is the time for us to work on what we all agree to, which is, let’s keep middle class taxes low. That’s what our economy needs. That’s what the American people deserve.

And if we get this part of it right, then a lot of the other issues surrounding deficit reduction in a fair and balanced and responsible way are going to be a whole lot easier. And if we get this wrong, the economy is going to go south.

It’s going to be much more difficult for us to balance our budgets and deal with our deficits, because if the economy is not strong, that means more money is going out in things like unemployment insurance, and less money is coming in, in terms of tax receipts. And it just actually makes our deficit worse.

So we really need to get this right. I can only do it with the help of the American people. So tweet—what was that again?—“My2K.” Tweet using the hashtag #My2K or e-mail; post it on a Member of Congress’s Facebook wall. Do what it takes to communicate a sense of urgency. We don’t have a lot of time here. We’ve got a few weeks to get this thing done. We could get it done tomorrow. Now, optimistically, I don’t think we’re going to get it done tomorrow—[laughter]—but I tell you, if everybody here goes out of their way to make their voices heard and spread the word to your friends and your family, your coworkers, your neighbors, then I am confident we will get it done. And we will put America on the right track not just for next year, but for many years to come. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to S. 3412.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters November 28, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody. Is that brighter than usual? [Laughter] Yes, that’s serious.

Well, listen, this is a wonderful opportunity for me to meet with my full Cabinet for the first time since the election took place. The primary purpose from my perspective is to say thank you, because everybody here, in their respective agencies, has done a remarkable job on behalf of the American people, across the board on a wide range of issues. They’ve always prioritized how do we make sure that we have a strong middle class, how do we grow our

economy, how do we put people back to work, and how do we keep the American people safe and continue to extend our influence and our ideals around the world. And I could not have a better collection of people, many of whom have stayed here throughout my first term. And I think we’ve had as little turnover as any President during the course of a first term, and the reason is because everybody has done such a remarkable job.

So my main purpose is to say thank you to them, but also to remind them, we’ve got a lot

of work to do. There are going to be a few specific issues that we spend a lot of time on. One in particular that I should note is that the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy is still being felt by families all across New York and New Jersey, parts of Connecticut. We are very pleased that under the leadership initially of Janet Napolitano and FEMA, but now Shaun Donovan, who's heading up a Task Force, we're focusing not only on recovery, but now on rebuilding and making sure those communities come back stronger than ever and people get the help that they need. So that will be an important topic because it's really going to be an interagency concern.

The second thing that we'll be talking about, obviously, is what's on the minds of a lot of American families across the country, and that is making sure that we get this fiscal cliff dealt with and that middle class taxes don't go up. I already spoke extensively about that today. I'll just repeat: There is no reason why taxes on middle class families should go up. It would be bad for the economy. It would be bad for those families. In fact, it would be bad for the world economy. And so I think it's very important that we get that resolved, and I am very open to a fair and balanced approach to reduce our deficit and provide the kind of certainty that

businesses and consumers need so that we can keep this recovery going.

And obviously, we'll be spending some time talking about national security issues as well.

But I just want to say thank you to this extraordinary Cabinet for a job well done. And I will take this opportunity to publicly embarrass two members of the Cabinet whose birthdays are either today or tomorrow: Ric Shinseki of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Happy birthday to you. And that is actually today. And Janet Napolitano's birthday is tomorrow.

All right, guys. Thank you. We want to get back to work.

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan E. Rice

Q. Mr. President, do you think the Hill is being fair to Susan Rice in its meetings?

The President. Thank you so much, guys.

Q. Any thoughts on that at all?

The President. Susan Rice is extraordinary. I couldn't be prouder of the job that she's done as the USPR.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Birth of the Founder of Sikhism November 28, 2012

I send my best wishes to all those here in America and around the world who are observing the anniversary of birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first Sikh guru. As always, this is a time to celebrate the principles of equality, respect, service, and interfaith cooperation that are the core of the Sikh faith and to recognize the extraordinary contributions that Sikh Americans make to our country every day. This

year, we also remember the innocent lives that were lost in the unspeakable violence directed against the Sikh congregation at the *gurdwara* in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I can think of no better way to honor their memory and to join our Sikh friends as they mark this sacred time than to recommit ourselves to the spirit of pluralism, equality and compassion that define both the Sikh community and our Nation.