

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Remarks Following a Meeting With the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Singapore**

*November 15, 2009*

*President Obama.* Well, good afternoon, everybody. We have just concluded the first-ever meeting between a United States President and the leaders of all 10 ASEAN countries. And I'd like to thank my friends Prime Minister Lee for hosting and Prime Minister Abhisit for cochairing this historic meeting.

As I said in Tokyo yesterday, the United States is a Pacific nation, and we enjoy deep historical ties to Southeast Asia, one of the most important and dynamic regions of the world. As the first U.S. President to have a personal connection to the region, I reaffirmed to my ASEAN friends that the United States is committed to strengthening its engagement in Southeast Asia both with our individual allies and partners and with ASEAN as an institution.

During our meeting, we talked about how the United States and ASEAN can work together as close partners, both within this region and throughout the world. We discussed the importance of meeting common challenges like climate change, nuclear proliferation, and working together in support of G-20 efforts to promote a sustained and balanced global economic recovery. And I reaffirmed the policy that I put forward yesterday in Tokyo with regard to Burma.

We also recognized the need for expanding high-level engagement on these and other major issues. I proposed sending Energy Secretary Steven Chu to the region next year to talk with his ASEAN counterparts about clean energy, and we agreed that our trade ministers should develop new initiatives to promote trade and investment that could create jobs and improve living standards in all our nations.

And finally, I stressed my strong support for ASEAN's ambitious goal of creating a community by 2015, including its bold effort to achieve economic integration, which will contribute to a sustained and lasting prosperity within this region and throughout the world.

We know that there's much work left to be done, but we also know that continued dialog and engagement between our nations can help us meet the common challenges of the 21st century and achieve our common goals.

So it was an honor to take part in this historic meeting. I look forward to a second leaders meeting next year. And I am so appreciative that we had such an outstanding chair during the course of this meeting. Thank you very much.

*Prime Minister Abhisit Wechachiwa of Thailand.* As the President just said, we just had an historic meeting with the leaders of ASEAN and the United States. This has been made possible not because of—just because of the longstanding partnership between individual countries in this region and the United States and more than three decades of partnership between the U.S. and ASEAN, I think also due to his personal leadership and his commitment to reinvigorate engagement with the region.

We had a discussion on an impressive range of issues, particularly with the U.S. support for the community building efforts of ASEAN, ranging from issues like our cooperation on disaster management, trade and investment, and the creation of the economic community in

ASEAN, as well as providing support for some of the new institutions like the Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission, which will be going to the U.S. to talk with the experts and consultations next year.

ASEAN also stands ready to be a reliable partner of the U.S. in attacking the various global and regional challenges, whether it's climate change, whether it's the Doha round, or counterterrorism and other security issues.

So this has been a historic meeting. We are pleased with the progress that this enhanced partnership has achieved. And we look forward to similar meetings next year.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:16 p.m. at the Shangri-La Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders.

*Locations:* Singapore.

*Names:* Abhisit Wechachiwa ; Chu, Steven ; Lee Hsien Loong.

*Subjects:* Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Nonproliferation efforts; Asia : Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Asia : Relations with U.S.; Asia : Trade with U.S.; Asian Nations, Association of Southeast (ASEAN); Commerce, international : Global financial markets :: Stabilization efforts; Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy, Department of : Secretary; Environment : Climate change; Japan : President Obama's visit; Singapore : President Obama's visit; Singapore : Prime Minister; Thailand : Prime Minister.