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I know that some are skeptical about the size and scale of this recovery plan. I understand that skepticism, which is why this recovery plan must and will include unprecedented measures that will allow the American people to hold my administration accountable for these results. We won't just throw money at our problems, we'll invest in what works. Instead of politicians doling out money behind a veil of secrecy, decisions about where we invest will be made public and informed by independent experts whenever possible.

We'll launch an unprecedented effort to root out waste, inefficiency, and unnecessary spending in our Government. And every American will be able to see how and where we spend taxpayer dollars by going to a new website called recovery.gov.

No one policy or program will solve the challenges we face right now, nor will this crisis recede in a short period of time. But if we act now and act boldly, if we start rewarding hard work and responsibility once more, if we act as citizens and not partisans and begin again the work of remaking America, then I have faith that we will emerge from this trying time even stronger and more prosperous than we were before.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on January 23 in the Library at the White House for broadcast on January 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 23 but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 24.

Statement on the Mexico City Policy and Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning

January 24, 2009

It is clear that the provisions of the Mexico City Policy are unnecessarily broad and unwarranted under current law, and for the past eight years, they have undermined efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning in developing countries. For these reasons, it is right for us to rescind this policy and restore critical efforts to protect and empower women and promote global economic development.

For too long, international family planning assistance has been used as a political wedge issue, the subject of a back-and-forth debate that has served only to divide us. I have no desire to continue this stale and fruitless debate.

It is time that we end the politicization of this issue. In the coming weeks, my administration will initiate a fresh conversation on family planning, working to find areas of common ground to best meet the needs of women and families at home and around the world.

I have directed my staff to reach out to those on all sides of this issue to achieve the goal of reducing unintended pregnancies. They will also work to promote safe motherhood, reduce maternal and infant mortality rates and increase educational and economic opportunities for women and girls.

In addition, I look forward to working with Congress to restore U.S. financial support for the U.N. Population Fund. By resuming funding to UNFPA, the U.S. will be joining 180 other donor nations working collaboratively to reduce poverty, improve the health of women and children, prevent HIV/AIDS, and provide family planning assistance to women in 154 countries.

Remarks on Energy

January 26, 2009

Good morning. Before I begin today's announcement, I want to say a few words about the deepening economic crisis that we've inherited and the need for urgent action.

Over the last few days, we've learned that Microsoft, Intel, United Airlines, Home Depot, Sprint Nextel, and Caterpillar are each cutting thousands of jobs. These are not just numbers on a page. As with the millions of jobs lost in 2008, these are working men and women whose families have been disrupted and whose dreams have been put on hold.

We owe it to each of them and to every single American to act with a sense of urgency and common purpose. We can't afford distractions, and we cannot afford delays, and that is why I look forward to signing an American recovery and reinvestment plan that will put millions of Americans to work and lay the foundation for stable growth that our economy needs and that our people demand. These are extraordinary times, and it calls for swift and extraordinary action.

At a time of such great challenge for America, no single issue is as fundamental to our future as energy. America's dependence on oil is one of the most serious threats that our Nation has faced. It bankrolls dictators, pays for nuclear proliferation, and funds both sides of our struggle against terrorism. It puts the American people at the mercy of shifting gas prices, stifles innovation, and sets back our ability to compete.

These urgent dangers to our national and economic security are compounded by the long-term threat of climate change, which if left unchecked could result in violent conflict, terrible storms, shrinking coastlines, and irreversible catastrophe. These are the facts, and they are well known to the American people; after all, there is nothing new about these warnings. Presidents have been sounding the alarm about energy dependence for decades. President Nixon promised to make our energy—our Nation energy independent by the end of the 1970s. When he spoke, we imported about a third of our oil; we now import more than half.

Year after year, decade after decade, we've chosen delay over decisive action. Rigid ideology has overruled sound science; special interests have overshadowed common sense; rhetoric has not led to the hard work needed to achieve results. And our leaders raise their voices each time there's a spike in gas prices only to grow quiet when the price falls at the pump.

Now America has arrived at a crossroads. Embedded in American soil and the wind and the sun, we have the resources to change. Our scientists, businesses, and workers have the capacity to move us forward. It falls on us to choose whether to risk the peril that comes with our current course or to seize the promise of energy independence. And for the sake of our security, our economy, and our planet, we must have the courage and commitment to change.

It will be the policy of my administration to reverse our dependence on foreign oil, while building a new energy economy that will create millions of jobs. We hold no illusion about the task that lies ahead. I cannot promise a quick fix; no single technology or set of regulations will get the job done. But we will commit ourselves to steady, focused, pragmatic pursuit of an America that is freed from our energy dependence and empowered by a new energy economy that puts millions of our citizens to work.

Today I'm announcing the first steps on our journey toward energy independence, as we develop new energy, set new fuel efficiency standards, and address greenhouse gas emissions. Each step begins to move us in a new direction, while giving us the tools that we need to change.

First, we must take bold action to create a new American energy economy that creates millions of jobs for our people. The American recovery and reinvestment plan before Congress places a down payment on this economy. It will put 460,000 Americans to work with clean energy investments and double the capacity to generate alternative energy over the next 3 years. It will lay down 3,000 miles of transmission lines to deliver this energy to every corner of our country. It will save taxpayers $2 billion a year by making 75 percent of Federal buildings more efficient. And it will save working families hundreds of dollars on their energy bills by weatherizing 2 million homes.

This is the boost that our economy needs, and the new beginning that our future demands. By passing the bill, Congress can act where Washington has failed to act over and

over again for 30 years. We need more than the same old empty promises. We need to show that this time it will be different. This is the time that Americans must come together on behalf of our common prosperity and security.

Second, we must ensure that the fuel-efficient cars of tomorrow are built right here in the United States of America. Increasing fuel efficiency in our cars and trucks is one of the most important steps that we can take to break our cycle of dependence on foreign oil. It will also help spark the innovation needed to ensure that our auto industry keeps pace with competitors around the world.

We will start by implementing new standards for model year 2011 so that we use less oil and families have access to cleaner, more efficient cars and trucks. This rule will be a down payment on a broader and sustained effort to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Congress has passed legislation to increase standards to at least 35 miles per gallon by 2020. That 40 percent increase in fuel efficiency for our cars and trucks could save over 2 million barrels of oil every day, nearly the entire amount of oil that we import from the Persian Gulf.

Going forward, my administration will work on a bipartisan basis in Washington and with industry partners across the country to forge a comprehensive approach that makes our economy stronger and our Nation more secure.

Third, the Federal Government must work with, not against, States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. California has shown bold and bipartisan leadership through its effort to forge 21st century standards, and over a dozen States have followed its lead. But instead of serving as a partner, Washington stood in their way. This refusal to lead risks the creation of a confusing and patchwork set of standards that hurts the environment and the auto industry.

The days of Washington dragging its heels are over. My administration will not deny facts; we will be guided by them. We cannot afford to pass the buck or push the burden onto the States. And that's why I'm directing the Environmental Protection Agency to immediately review the denial of the California waiver request and determine the best way forward. This will help us create incentives to develop new energy that will make us less dependent on the oil that endangers our security, our economy, and our planet.

As we move forward, we will fully take into account the unique challenges facing the American auto industry and the taxpayer dollars that now support it. And let me be clear: Our goal is not to further burden an already struggling industry; it is to help America's automakers prepare for the future. This commitment must extend beyond the short-term assistance for businesses and workers. We must help them thrive by building the cars of tomorrow and galvanizing a dynamic and viable industry for decades to come.

Finally, we will make it clear to the world that America is ready to lead. To protect our climate and our collective security, we must call together a truly global coalition. I've made it clear that we will act, but so too must the world. That's how we will deny leverage to dictators and dollars to terrorists. And that's how we will ensure that nations like China and India are doing their part, just as we are now willing to do ours.

It is time for America to lead, because this moment of peril must be turned into one of progress. If we take action, we can create new industries and revive old ones; we can open new factories and power new farms; we can lower costs and revive our economy. We can do that, and we must do that. There's much work to be done; there is much further for us to go.

But I want to be clear from the beginning of this administration that we have made our choice: America will not be held hostage to dwindling resources, hostile regimes, and a warming planet. We will not be put off from action because action is hard. Now is the time to make the tough choices. Now is the time to meet the challenge at this crossroad of history by choosing a future that is safer for our country, prosperous for our planet, and sustainable.

Those are my priorities, and they're reflected in the Executive orders that I'm about to sign. Thank you so much for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to memoranda on the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and the State of California request for waiver under 42 U.S.C. 7543(b), the Clean Air Act.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
January 26, 2009

So I'm pleased to have a chance to confer with Senator Mitchell, as well as Secretary Clinton, on this initiative around the Arab-Israeli peace process. And we're fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated public servant who is willing to take on what I think everybody understands is going to be a very tough job.

The cause of peace in the Middle East is important to the United States and our national interests; it's important to me personally; it is important to Arabs and Jews; it is important to Christians and Muslims and Jews all around the world. And the charge that Senator Mitchell has is to engage vigorously and consistently in order for us to achieve genuine progress.

And when I say "progress"—not just photo ops, but progress that is concretely felt by people on the ground, so that people feel more secure in their lives, so that they feel that the hopes and dreams and aspirations of their children can be met. That is going to be our task. It is not something that we're going to be able to do overnight, but I'm absolutely confident that if the United States is engaged in a consistent way and an early—in early fashion, that we can make genuine progress.

Now, understand that Senator Mitchell is going to be fully empowered by me and fully empowered by Secretary Clinton. So when he speaks, he will be speaking for us. And I'm hopeful that during this initial trip—one of the earliest initiatives that we have taken diplomatically—that not only is he able to communicate effectively how urgent we consider the issue, but that we're also going to be able to listen and to learn and to find out what various players in the region are thinking.

And more immediately, we hope that Senator Mitchell will be able to give us some ideas in terms of how we can solidify the cease-fire, ensure Israel's security, also ensure that Palestinians in Gaza are able to get the basic necessities they need and that they can see a pathway towards long-term development that will be so critical in order for us to achieve a lasting peace.

So I'm very grateful for Senator Mitchell for doing this. I'm grateful to Secretary Clinton for her leadership in making sure this happened early. And what we're now going to do is to discuss some of the details of the trip. So unfortunately, I'm going to be kicking you out. [*Laughter*]

All right, thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:33 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on India's Republic Day
January 26, 2009

As the people of India and people of Indian origin in America and around the world celebrate Republic Day on January 26, I send the warmest greetings of the American people to the people of India. Together, we celebrate our shared belief in democracy, liberty, pluralism, and religious tolerance.

Our nations have built broad and vibrant partnerships in every field of human endeavor. Our rapidly growing and deepening friendship with India offers benefits to all the world's citizens as our scientists solve environmental challenges together, our doctors discover new medicines, our engineers advance our societies, our