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differences with parts of my plan that the Republicans have, and I respect that. In some cases they may just not be as familiar with what's in the package as I would like. I don't expect a hundred percent agreement from my Republican colleagues, but I do hope that we can all put politics aside and do the American people's business right now. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. in the Ohio Clock Corridor at the U.S. Capitol.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Business Leaders
January 28, 2009

Thank you. Well, I want to thank Sam and David for their outstanding words. I want to thank all of you for being here today.

A few moments ago, I met with some of the leading business executives in the country. And it was a sober meeting, because these companies and the workers they employ are going through times more trying than any that we've seen in a long, long while. Just the other day, seven of our largest corporations announced they were making major job cuts. Some of the business leaders in this room have had to do the same. And yet even as we discussed the seriousness of this challenge, we left our meeting confident that we can turn our economy around.

But each of us, as Dave indicated, are going to have to do our share. Part of what led our economy to this perilous moment was a sense of irresponsibility that prevailed in Wall Street and in Washington. And that's why I called for a new era of responsibility in my Inaugural Address last week, an era where each of us chips in so that we can climb our way out of this crisis: executives and factory floor workers, educators and engineers, health care professionals and elected officials.

As we discussed in our meeting a few minutes ago, corporate America will have to accept its own responsibilities to its workers and the American public. But these executives also understand that without wise leadership in Washington, even the best-run businesses can't do as well as they might. They understand that what makes an idea sound is not whether it's Democrat or Republican, but whether it makes good economic sense for their workers and companies. And they understand that when it comes to rebuilding our economy, we don't have a moment to spare.

The businesses that are shedding jobs to stay afloat, they can't afford inaction or delay. The workers who are returning home to tell their husbands and wives and children that they no longer have a job and all those who live in fear that their job will be next on the cutting blocks, they need help now. They are looking to Washington for action, bold and swift. And that is why I hope to sign an American recovery and reinvestment plan into law in the next few weeks.

Now, most of the money that we're investing as part of this plan will get out the door immediately and go directly to job creation, generating or saving 3 to 4 million new jobs. And the vast majority of these jobs will be created in the private sector, because, as these CEOs well know, business, not government, is the engine of growth in this country.

But even as this plan puts Americans back to work, it will also make the critical investments in alternative energy, in safer roads, better health care, and modern schools that will lay the foundation for long-term growth and prosperity. And it will invest in broadband and emerging technologies, like the ones imagined and introduced to the world by people like Sam and so many of the CEOs here today, because that's how America will retain and regain its competitive edge in the 21st century.

I know that there are some who are skeptical of the size and scale of this recovery plan. And I understand that skepticism, given some of the things that have happened in this town in the past. That's why this recovery plan will include unprecedented measures that will allow the American people to hold my administration accountable. Instead of just throwing money at our problems, we'll try something

new in Washington. We will invest in what works. Instead of politicians doling out money behind a veil of secrecy, decisions about where we invest will be made public on the Internet and will be informed by independent experts whenever possible.

We will launch a sweeping 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 web site called recovery.gov, because I firmly believe what Justice Louis Brandeis once said, that "sunlight is the best disinfectant," and I know that restoring transparency is not only the surest way to achieve results but also to earn back the trust in government without which we cannot deliver the changes the American people sent us here to make.

In the end, the answer to our economic troubles rests less in my hands, or in the hands of our legislators, than it does with America's workers and the businesses that employ them. They are the ones whose efforts and ideas will determine our economic destiny, just as they always have. For in the end, it's businesses, large and small, that generate the jobs, provide the salaries, and serve as the foundation on which the American people's lives and dreams depend. All we can do, those of us here in Washington, is help create a favorable climate in which workers can prosper, businesses can thrive, and our economy can grow. And that is exactly what the recovery plan I've proposed is intended to do. And that's exactly what I intend to achieve soon.

Thank you very much for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Samuel J. Palmisano, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, IBM Corporation; and David M. Cote, chairman and chief executive officer, Honeywell International.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Arlington, Virginia

January 28, 2009

Well, sorry we're running a little bit late. I want to, first of all, thank all the men and women in uniform who are represented here. They are the best that this country has to offer. And the first thing that I said to the Joint Chiefs in this meeting was how grateful we are for their service. The sacrifices that they and their families make are what are responsible for our freedoms that sometimes we take for granted.

And as Commander in Chief, one of my principal goals during my Presidency is going to be to make sure that they have the resources and the support that they need to carry out the critical missions that keep our Nation safe each and every day.

I had a wonderful discussion with the Joint Chiefs—we kind of lost track of time—about a range of issues facing our military as well as the threats that face this Nation, both short term and long term. We had discussions about Iraq as well as Afghanistan. We talked about some of the broader global risks that may arise and the kind of planning and coordination that's going to be required between our military and our civilian forces in order to accomplish our long-term national security objectives.

We also talked about making sure that the health of our force is always in our sights. And I know that all the Chiefs that are represented here, as well as Secretary Gates, are constantly thinking about what we need to do to make sure that people who are in uniform for the United States are getting the kinds of support that they need, and that their families are getting the support that they need. And that's something that I'm absolutely committed to, and I know that Vice President Biden is as well.

We're going to have some difficult decisions that we're going to have to make surrounding Iraq and Afghanistan, most immediately. Obviously, our efforts to continue to go after extremist organizations that would do harm to the