

lenges we face will require the work of all nations and all peoples. That's how real change happens. It will require the leadership of everybody in this room, because despite our differences, our people, I believe, share common aspirations: to live in security free from fear, to live in dignity free from want, to provide for our families, and to realize a better tomorrow. And as leaders, each of us has a responsibility to an-

swer those aspirations and to leave our children a better world.

And so I want to propose a toast to Secretary-General Ban and to the spirit that brings us here today; that we insist not only upon peace and progress, but that we are also willing to work for it and to sacrifice for it.

Cheers.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters.

## Remarks at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting in New York City September 23, 2010

*President Obama.* Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Please have a seat. Well, I am thrilled to be here. I want to thank President Clinton for the kind, although protocol-busting, introduction. [Laughter] And I want to thank him for inviting me back to join you at this year's meeting.

It was an extraordinary pleasure to be here at CGI last year. It's a pleasure to be back today, not only because of my highest regard for President Clinton personally, not just because of my gratitude to him for putting up with long hours away from our Secretary of State—[laughter]—

*Former President William J. Clinton.* Thank you for being grateful, though.

*President Obama.* I am grateful. [Laughter] But also because of the tremendous work he's doing through GCI [CGI].<sup>\*</sup>

For the past 5 years, President Clinton has applied the full force of his energy and his influence—and it is formidable—to the work of this initiative. And with that passion and with that determination and that charm of his that makes it so darn hard to say no, he has marshaled \$57 billion worth of commitments from folks like you, and that's bringing hope and opportunity to more than 200 million people around the world. It's a remarkable record of achievement.

But I'm not just here today to sing President Clinton's praises or to commend all of you for the terrific work that each of you have done, al-

though I am grateful for that. I am here to play an even more important role, and that is to introduce my better half: my extraordinary wife, and America's extraordinary First Lady, Michelle Obama.

Now, Bill Clinton understands where I'm coming from here. [Laughter] He knows what it's like to be married to somebody who's smarter—[laughter]—somebody who's better looking—[laughter]—somebody who's just all around a little more impressive than you are. [Laughter] Right? It's—this is not news to people. [Laughter]

Since Michelle and I first started dating 22 years ago, pretty much everybody I know who's met her at some point comes up to me and says, "You know, Barack, you're great and all, I like you, but your wife, now, she's really something." [Laughter] And I, of course, agree. They're right. And I feel grateful that Michelle so far, at least, has not run for any offices I've been running for. [Laughter] She would beat me thoroughly.

Fortunately for me, as much as she cares deeply about public service, she hasn't shown much interest in the political chatter. She doesn't think about who's winning or losing, what the polls say, or who gets the best headline in the papers. No matter what the issue, there's only one thing that she wants to know, and that's: Who are we helping? That's what she

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\* White House correction.

asks. Who is this going to make a difference for? Whose life is this going to improve?

And while I get plenty of good advice from a lot of people during the course of the day, at the end of each day, it is Michelle—her moral voice, her moral center—that cuts through all the noise in Washington and reminds me of why I'm there in the first place.

She reminds me with her work to tackle childhood obesity so our kids can have healthy lives and the futures they deserve. She reminds me by throwing open the doors of our White House to young people from all different backgrounds, letting them know that we believe in their promise, letting them know that the White House is the people's house, and letting young people know that they're not that far away from all the power and prestige and decisions that are made, that, in fact, this is something they can aspire to, they can be a part of, because we are a government of and by and for the people.

She reminds me with her work to be a voice for America's military families and veterans, using her platform as First Lady to make sure they get support and respect and the appreciation that they deserve.

And while I am tremendously proud of the First Lady that she's been for this country, at the end of the day I'm most grateful that she's been such a partner to me and the best mother that I know.

Every moment that I spend with my daughters, I am thankful for all that she's done to make them who they are. Every day, I see her strength and her kindness and her character reflected in the two of them. And there is no greater gift, and I know Bill feels the same way about when he looks at Chelsea, he sees this incredible force that a mother can bring.

To this day, I still don't know how I talked her into marrying me, but I know that I am the luckiest guy in the world that she did. So it is with that that I would like to introduce you to my first lady, America's First Lady, Michelle Obama.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. at the Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Chelsea Clinton, daughter of former President Clinton and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of First Lady Michelle Obama.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Naoto Kan of Japan in New York City *September 23, 2010*

Let me officially welcome the opportunity to speak again with Prime Minister Kan. We had an opportunity for intensive dialogue when we met together at the G-8 in Toronto. And once again, we have reaffirmed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance not only to regional stability, not only to the security of both our countries, but we believe it's one of the cornerstones of peace and security throughout the world.

So we look forward to discussing further how we can strengthen this alliance in the 21st century, how our economic relationship can continue to improve for the prosperity of both our peoples, how we can address regional hotspots and tensions that may arise, but also how we can work as leaders together in dealing with inter-

national problems like climate change and nuclear nonproliferation.

Japan will also be hosting the APEC meeting this year, and I'm looking forward to traveling to Yokohama, and I'm looking very much to finding ways that we can work together to shape an architecture for prosperity and economic development in the Pacific region, where obviously both the United States and Japan have a deep and longstanding interest.

So welcome. I hope you enjoy your stay in New York. And I look forward to my stay in Japan later this year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:12 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.