

is all those things are nice and they're important, but if we want to grow the economy right now then we have to think bigger; we've got to do something bolder and more significant.

So we put forward the "American Jobs Act," which contains ideas that are historically supported by Democrats and Republicans, like rebuilding our infrastructure, our roads, and our bridges, putting teachers back in the classroom, providing tax credits to small businesses.

You say, Norah, that the reason they haven't voted for them is because they don't want to tax small business. Well, actually, that's not—that's their rationale then it doesn't fly, because the bill that they voted down yesterday, a component of the American jobs bill, essentially said we can create hundreds of thousands of jobs rebuilding our infrastructure, making America more competitive, and the entire program will be paid for by a tax not on millionaires, but people making a million dollars a year or more, which in the United States is about—a little over 300,000 people.

Now, there aren't a lot of small businesses across the country that are making that kind of money. In fact, less than 3 percent of small businesses make more than \$250,000 a year. So what they've said is, we prefer to protect 300,000 people rather than put hundreds of thousands of people back to work and benefit 300 million Americans who are hurting because of low growth.

So we're going to keep on pushing. Now, there are steps that we can take absent congressional action. And the refinancing proposal that we put forward in Las Vegas is an example of that—helping students with student loans. We're going to keep on rolling out administra-

tive steps that we can take that strengthen the economy. But if we're going to do something big to jump-start the economy at a time when it's stabilized, but unemployment is way too high, Congress is going to need to act.

And in terms of my track record on the economy, here's just a simple way of thinking about it: When I came into office, the U.S. economy had contracted by 9 percent, the largest contraction since the Great Depression. Little over a year later, the economy was growing by 4 percent, and it's been growing ever since.

Now, is that good enough? Absolutely not. We've got to do more. And as soon as I get some signal from Congress that they're willing to take their responsibilities seriously, I think we can do more. But that's going to require them to break out of the rigid ideological positions that they've been taking. And the same is true, by the way, when it comes to deficit reduction.

We can solve all our problems. We can grow our economy now, put people back to work, reduce our deficit. And you get surprising consensus from economists about how to do it, from both the left and the right. It's just a matter of setting politics aside. And we're constantly remembering that the election is 1 year away. If we do that, there's no reason why can't solve these problems.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:40 p.m. at the Claude Debussy Theater. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Georgios Andreas Papandreou of Greece; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission.

Remarks at Cannes City Hall in Cannes November 4, 2011

Good afternoon. *Bon apres-midi*. I studied French in school, and that's about as far as I got. [Laughter]

But, Mr. President, I understand clearly the affection with which you've once again described our alliance and the friendship be-

tween our peoples. So thank you, Nicolas, my partner, *mon ami*. Thank you.

To Generals Puga and Estrate and members of the French Armed Forces; to Mayor Brochand and the people of Cannes: Thank you for your wonderful hospitality and the beautiful

weather—[laughter]—that I'm enjoying here today.

We stand here today as free and democratic peoples because of each other. It was the ideas of the enlightenment, centered here in France, that helped inspire a band of colonists across the ocean to seek our freedom. It was the success of our Revolution that helped inspire your own. In our founding documents, we pledge ourselves to the same inalienable rights, and to the truth that all men and women are created equal. We are societies where our diversity is considered a strength, where you can become President even if your name is Obama or Sarkozy. [Laughter] We live by a common creed: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—*liberte, egalite, fraternite*.

And for more than two centuries, we haven't simply professed these ideas, we have preserved them, by serving together and by sacrificing together. And not far from here is the hometown of Admiral de Grasse, who helped Americans secure our independence. Here at this memorial, we recall our shared sacrifices in the trenches of the First World War. Just as President Sarkozy and I have honored those who fell at Normandy, let it also be remembered that American and free French forces stormed the beaches of this southern coast. And not far from here, at Rhone, some of them rest in peace in the land that they liberated.

Nor have we simply defended these ideals for ourselves. Together, we have stood up for our ideals around the world. Today we pay special tribute to all those who have served and given their lives—French, American, and forces from our allies and partners—so that Afghanistan will never again become a haven for those who would attack us. They have sacrificed to keep us all safe, and we honor them all.

We saw this same solidarity most recently in the mission to protect the Libyan people. When the old regime threatened to massacre on a horrific scale, the world refused to stand by. The United States was proud to play a decisive role, especially in the early days, taking out Libyan air defenses and conducting precision strikes that stopped the regime in its tracks. But at the same time, this mission showed us

why NATO remains the world's most effective alliance. We acted quickly, in days; the fastest mobilization in NATO history. And whether contributing forces or command staff, every single one of NATO's 28 members played a role. Eighteen nations, including Arab States, provided forces.

And in a historic first, our NATO allies, including France, and especially the extraordinary leadership of President Sarkozy, helped us to conduct 90 percent of our strike missions—90 percent. So that showed more nations bearing the burdens and costs of peace and security. And that's how our alliance must work in the 21st century.

In this mission, French and American soldiers, airmen, naval officers, served shoulder to shoulder: the commanders who planned and executed this complex operation, the pilots who prevented a massacre in Benghazi, the tanker crews from bases here in France who sustained this operation, the airmen who delivered lifesaving aid, the sailors and marines who enforced the arms embargo at sea.

In fact, American pilots even flew French fighter jets off a French aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean. Allies don't get any closer than that. Thanks to their extraordinary service, the last air mission over Libya ended on Monday, and that operation ended in giving the Libyan people the opportunity to live with freedom and democracy. And I might add, we succeeded in bring every single one of our servicemembers back safely, which is a remarkable achievement.

Every man and woman in uniform who participated in this effort can know that you have accomplished every objective. You saved the lives of countless Libyan men, women, and children. And today, the Libyan people have liberated their country and begun to forge their own future, and the world has once again seen that the longing for freedom and dignity is universal.

Thousands of personnel made this operation a success, but we are honored to have some of them join us today. And I would ask you in joining me in saluting Admirals Jim Stavridis and Sam Locklear, as well as General Ralph Jodice, and all our servicemembers who are here for a job well done.

Finally, I would note that this success is part of a larger story. After a difficult decade, the tide of war is receding. The long war in Iraq is finally coming to an end. With our allies and partners, including the extraordinary sacrifices of the French people, we've achieved major victories against Al Qaida, including Usama bin Laden. In Afghanistan, where French and American soldiers fight side by side, we've begun a transition so Afghans can take responsibility for their security and our troops can begin coming home.

Today, America and our allies are moving forward with confidence and with strength. And these men and women in uniform carry on a legacy that I actually can see from the windows of the White House. In one direction, there's the monument to Washington; in the other, a statue of Rochambeau, who served so well at Washington's side. And at the base of that statue are words Washington expressed to his friend after the Revolutionary War in America was won. And I've shared these words with President Sarkozy on one of our visits, so I want to conclude with them this afternoon, because they capture the spirit that we celebrate today.

Statement on the Hajj and Eid al-Adha November 5, 2011

Michelle and I extend our greetings for a happy Eid al-Adha to Muslims worldwide and congratulate those performing Hajj. Thousands of Muslim Americans are among those who have joined one of the world's largest and most diverse gatherings in making the pilgrimage to Mecca and nearby sites.

As Muslims celebrate this Eid, they will also commemorate Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son by distributing food to those less fortunate around the world. They join the

This is what Washington said to his dear friend from France: "We are fellow laborers in the cause of liberty, and we have lived together as brothers should do—in harmonious friendship."

President Sarkozy, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Armed Forces of France and the United States, for more than two centuries we have stood together in friendship, and because of our unwavering commitment to the cause of liberty, I'm confident that we'll continue to stand together, strong and free, for all the centuries to come. So *vive la France*. God bless America. And long live the alliance between our two great nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:27 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Benoit Puga, chief of staff to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France; Brig. Gen. Francois Estrate, head, France's Military Mission to the United Nations; Mayor Bernard Brochand of Cannes, France; Adm. James G. Stavridis, USN, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III, USN, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Africa; and Lt. Gen. Ralph J. Jodice II, USN, commander, Allied Air Component Command Headquarters, Izmir, Turkey.

United States and the international community in relief efforts to assist those struggling to survive in the Horn of Africa and those recovering from the devastating earthquake in Turkey.

The Eid and Hajj rituals are a reminder of the shared roots of the world's Abrahamic faiths and the powerful role that faith plays in motivating communities to serve and stand with those in need. On behalf of the American people, we extend our best wishes during this Hajj season. *Eid Mubarak* and *Hajj Mabrouk*.