

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

## **Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters**

*June 22, 2010*

*The President.* Well, we just finished up a Cabinet meeting with obviously a very wide-ranging agenda. One of the first things we talked about was the progress that we're making in terms of growing the economy again. We've now seen five straight months of job growth and economic growth. Over half a million private sector jobs have been created since the beginning of the year. But we also know that it is not moving as fast as we want, that there's still millions of Americans out there who are looking for work or looking for more hours or are behind on their payments because they experienced unemployment very recently.

And so we discussed how all of us working together, agency by agency, are going to be working to encourage job growth. And we discussed the need for Congress to continue to move forward on an agenda of targeted measures that can help small businesses invest, that can make sure that unemployed workers are getting hired, that continue to add to the momentum of job growth and economic growth that is needed so badly after the damage that's been done over the last couple of years.

We also got a full briefing from our national security team, as well as Vice President Biden, on Iraq. It hasn't received a lot of attention lately, but we are on pace to meet every target that we set at the beginning of this administration, to have our combat troops out and to transfer security responsibilities to the Iraqis. And we had a discussion about the progress that's been made in terms of government formation there.

We also discussed the importance of the transition from a Defense-weighted U.S. approach to a more State Department-weighted approach and the need to make sure that we are adequately funding and supporting all the diplomatic measures that are going to be necessary so that we can partner effectively with a new Iraqi Government over the long haul.

We had a discussion about the oil spill in the Gulf and the important measures that are being taken both in capping the well, in making sure that we are dealing with the consequences on the shorelines and estuaries and bays across the Gulf, and also making sure that ordinary Americans who are being devastated economically are compensated properly.

Ken Feinberg has already traveled to the Gulf, and he is meeting with Governors and local officials with the \$20 billion fund that has been set up. We want to make sure that that money is moving out as quickly as possible, as fairly as possible, and that some of the people who I've had a chance to talk to down in the Gulf who are just desperate for relief are getting help as quickly as possible.

And Secretary Napolitano also briefed us on the range of measures that are being taken to ensure that we are coordinating as effectively as possible when it comes to skimming the oil as it's coming forward, initiating the burns, trying to make sure that we're capturing all the oil that we can.

And finally, we talked about energy. In the context of the oil spill, as I said last week during my Oval Office address, this has to be a wakeup call to the country that we are prepared and ready to move forward on a new energy strategy that the American people desperately want, but for which there's been insufficient political will. It is time for us to move to a clean

energy future. I think the American people understand that it is a jobs creator, that it is a national security enhancer, that it is what is needed environmentally.

And we have the opportunity to build on actions that have already been taken in the House of Representatives. The Senate has an opportunity, before the August recess and the elections, to stand up and move forward on something that could have enormous, positive consequences for generations to come. And the entire Cabinet here recognizes, with all the other stuff that they're doing, that if we get energy right, that an awful lot of things can happen as a consequence.

So we are mindful that we have a lot of work to do, but we are very pleased with the progress that has been made by each of these Cabinet members, and we are looking forward to redoubling our efforts in the months to come.

All right. Thank you.

*Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal/Military Operations in Afghanistan*

Q. Mr. President, are you going to fire Mr. McChrystal?

*The President.* General McChrystal is on his way here and I am going to meet with him, Secretary Gates will be meeting with him as well. I think it's clear that the article in which he and his team appeared showed a poor—showed poor judgment. But I also want to make sure that I talk to him directly before I make any final decisions.

All right. Let me—actually, let me make one last point about this. Even as General McChrystal is on his way here, I want everybody to keep in mind what our central focus is, and that is success in making sure that Al-Qaida and its affiliates cannot attack the United States and its allies. And we've got young men and women there who are making enormous sacrifices, families back home who are making enormous sacrifices. And so whatever decision that I make with respect to General McChrystal or any other aspect of Afghan policy is determined entirely on how I can make sure that we have a strategy that justifies the enormous courage and sacrifice that those men and women are making over there, and that ultimately makes this country safer. I know Secretary Gates feels the exact same way.

All right. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:22 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Special Master for TARP Executive Compensation Kenneth R. Feinberg, in his capacity as administrator of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill compensation fund; and Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, USA, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Cabinet meetings; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Feinberg, Kenneth R.; Gates, Robert M.; McChrystal, Stanley A.; Napolitano, Janet A.

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businesses; Cabinet : Members, meetings with President; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy : National energy policy; Gulf of Mexico : Deepwater Horizon oil spill :: Economic effects and recovery efforts; Gulf of Mexico : Deepwater Horizon oil spill :: Environmental effects and cleanup efforts; Homeland Security, Department of : Secretary; Iraq : Democracy efforts; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; White House Office : Vice President.

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