

college, their families can afford them to go to college.

And let's make sure all our workers have the skills that companies like this one are looking for, because we've got to have folks engaged in lifelong learning. The days when you started out at 20 at one company and you just kept on doing the same thing for 40 years, that's not going to happen anymore.

So even if—as I was meeting some of the folks here, they had been in the industry, they'd been machinists, they'd been in manufacturing for years. But they're constantly upgrading their skills and retraining. And some of them had been laid off and had gone back to school before they came to this company. And so we've got to make sure those opportunities for people midcareer and onward, that they can constantly go back to a community college and retool so that they can make sure they're qualified for the jobs of tomorrow.

At a time when so many Americans are looking for work, no job opening should go unfilled just because people didn't have an opportunity to get the training they needed. And that's why I've asked Congress, join me in a national commitment to train 2 million Americans with the skills that will lead directly to a job, right now.

We need to create more partnerships like the one this plant has with John Tyler Community College. We should give more community colleges the resources they need. I want them to be community career centers, places that teach people skills that companies are looking for right now, from data management to the kind of high-tech manufacturing that's being done at this facility.

So, day by day, we're restoring this economy from crisis. But we can't stop there. We've got to make this economy ready for tomorrow. Day by day, we're creating new jobs, but we can't

stop there, not until everybody who's out there pounding the pavement, sending out their résumés has a chance to land one of those jobs.

Every day we're producing more oil and gas than we have in years, but we can't stop there. I want our businesses to lead the world in clean energy too. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world, but we can't stop there. I want to make sure more of our students can afford to go to those colleges and universities. Everybody knows we've got the best workers on Earth, but we can't stop there. We've got to make sure the middle class doesn't just survive these times, we want them to thrive. We want them to dream big dreams and to feel confident about the future.

I did not run for this office just to get back to where we were. I ran for this office to get us to where we need to be. And I promise you we will get there. Some of these challenges may take a year, some may take one term, some may take a decade, but we're going to get there. Because when we work together, we know what we're capable of. We've got the tools, we've got the know-how, we've got the toughness to overcome any obstacle. And when we come together and combine our creativity and our optimism and our willingness to work hard, and if we're harnessing our brainpower and our manpower and our horsepower, I promise you we will thrive again. We will get to where we need to go. And we will leave behind an economy that is built to last. We will make this another American century.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:57 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to James M. Guyette, president and chief executive officer, Rolls-Royce North America Inc.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the March 11 Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster in Japan *March 9, 2012*

As we mark 1 year since the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in

Japan, Michelle and I join all Americans in honoring the memory of the 19,000 victims lost

or missing. We continue to be inspired by the Japanese people, who faced unimaginable loss with extraordinary fortitude. Their resilience and determination to rebuild stronger than before is an example for us all.

Since the first moments of the disaster, the United States mobilized to help our friends in Japan. At the peak of Operation Tomodachi—our single, largest bilateral military operation with Japan ever—the Department of Defense had 24,000 personnel, 190 aircraft, and 24 Navy ships supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. One year later, we remain committed to assist the people of Japan to rebuild. This effort, led by the Japanese Government, has benefited from the compassion of the American people, who in difficult economic times have given generously to help. Today, U.S. experts continue to support Japan's ongoing efforts to deal with the challenges associated with Fukushima, and the TOMODACHI public-private partnership is investing in the next generation to strengthen

cultural and economic ties. We are grateful for the contributions of Americans, civilian and military, who have joined with people from around the world to support Japan's recovery.

No one can forget the tragic images of disaster in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami or the heartbreak of friends who lost homes, belongings, and most importantly, loved ones. Even as it works to rebuild its devastated northeastern region, Japan has never wavered from its steadfast commitment to help other countries around the world. So, on this day when our thoughts and prayers are with the Japanese people in remembrance of the hardship faced 1 year ago, let us also celebrate the recovery underway in Japan and pay tribute to Japan's unflagging dedication to bettering the lives of others throughout the world. The friendship and alliance between our two nations is unshakeable and, going forward, the people of Japan will continue to have an enduring partner in the United States.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Houston, Texas March 9, 2012

The President. Hello, Texas! Oh, it is good to be back in Houston. The weather wasn't quite cooperating. [Laughter] But we got here. And so did you.

We've got some wonderful folks here, but first of all, can everybody please give Debra Jones a big round of applause for the wonderful introduction.

We have in the house your outstanding mayor, Annise Parker. We've got Congressman Gene Green. We've got Congressman Al Green. He's the one who taught me how to sing. [Laughter] We've got Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. And we have all of you.

It is good to be in this facility. As a White Sox fan, I have a fond memories—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. —of this facility. [Laughter] I want to thank Jim Crane for helping to make it available. And I want to thank all of you for being part of this thing here today.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

So I'm here today not just because I need your help. I'm here because the country needs your help. Now, there was a reason why so many of you worked your hearts out back in 2008. It wasn't because you thought it was going to be easy. After all, you decided to support a candidate named Barack Obama. You knew that wasn't going to be a sure thing. [Laughter]

You didn't join the campaign just because of me. You joined it because of your commitment to each other. You joined it because you had a common vision for America. Not a vision where everybody is left to fend for themselves; it was a vision where everyone who works hard has a chance to get ahead, not just those at the very top, but everybody.

That's the vision that we shared. That's the change that we believed in. And we knew it wouldn't come easy. We knew it wouldn't come quickly. We knew problems had been building up for decades. But I tell you what, in