

shared sacrifice. But it can be done. And we'll be stronger for it.

And what's lacking is not the capacity to meet our challenges. What is lacking is our politics. And that's something entirely within your power to solve. So this November, you can remind the world how a strong economy is built, not from the top down, but from a growing, thriving middle class.

This November, you can remind the world how it is that we've traveled this far as a country, not by telling everybody to fend for themselves, but by coming together as one American family, all of us pitching in, all of us pulling our own weight.

This November, you can provide a mandate for the change we need right now. You can move this Nation forward. And you can remind

the world once again why the United States of America is still the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to North Olmsted, OH, resident Angela Schafer and her daughter Megan; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Mark M. Zandi, chief economist, Moody's Analytics; Erskine B. Bowles and Alan K. Simpson, Co-chairs, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform; and Sens. Saxby C. Chambliss, Thomas A. Coburn, G. Kent Conrad, Michael D. Crapo, Richard J. Durbin, and Mark R. Warner.

## Statement on Senate Confirmation of Maria del Carmen Aponte as the United States Ambassador to El Salvador *June 14, 2012*

Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte has been a highly effective advocate for the United States in El Salvador, earning respect from across the political spectrum, from civilians and military leaders, and from public and private officials. As an honest broker, she has helped advance programs and policies to enhance citizen security in El Salvador, while weakening transnational crime links that affect our own national security. Ambassador Aponte has also been a strong voice for democratic governance throughout the region. She should have never been forced to leave her post. I am

grateful to Ambassador Aponte for her service and for the hard work that took place alongside our partners in the U.S. Senate, in particular Majority Leader Harry Reid and Senator Robert Menendez, to achieve her confirmation. Today's vote is a testament to the value of perseverance and a reminder that our national security must be bigger than politics and that Congress can still do the right thing. I look forward to continuing to work with Ambassador Aponte to build on our partnership with the people of El Salvador and advance our partnerships throughout the Americas.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Certain Members of the Government of Belarus and Other Persons To Undermine Belarus Democratic Processes or Institutions *June 14, 2012*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the auto-

matic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the

Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus are to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2012.

In 2011, the Government of Belarus continued its crackdown against political opposition, civil society, and independent media. The government arbitrarily arrested, detained, and imprisoned citizens for criticizing officials or for participating in demonstrations; imprisoned at least one human rights activist on manufactured charges; and prevented independent media from disseminating information and materials. These actions show that the Government of Belarus has taken additional steps backward in the development of democratic governance and respect for human rights.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons to undermine Belarus democratic processes or institutions, to commit human rights abuses related to political repression, and to engage in public corruption continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared to deal with this threat and the related measures blocking the property of certain persons.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City June 14, 2012

*The President.* Well, first of all, to Sarah Jessica and her whole crew—[laughter]—Matthew apparently had a show he had to run off to—but for them to let us crash their house, Secret Service tromping all over the place, is incredibly generous. And they've been great friends. Sarah Jessica is doing all kinds of stuff with our Arts and Humanities Council, and she has been a great leader and champion on behalf of the arts. And we could not thank her more for everything that she's done. So please give her a big round of applause.

To Anna, who has been just a great friend, and I think this is—she is working really hard here in New York, but she actually was in Chicago as well, making things happen on our behalf. So thank you, Anna, for everything that you do.

Now, I recognize that most of you are here to see Michelle. [Laughter] I understand. I have been there before. I always explain I rank fifth in the hierarchy in the White House. [Laughter] There's Michelle, my mother-in-

law, the two girls, Bo—so that actually makes it six—[laughter]—in terms of star wattage. People come to the White House, first they ask, where's Michelle? They ask, where are the girls? And then they say, where's Bo? [Laughter] But that's okay. See, that's how you're thinking too, isn't it? [Laughter] It makes sense to you.

But I do want to say—I don't get a chance to say this a lot publicly—some of you know that Michelle had some skepticism about a life in politics. I think that's well known. And so the grace and the strength and the poise and the warmth that she has brought to an extraordinarily difficult task as First Lady and still being the best mom imaginable couldn't make me prouder. And so I'm very pleased she's here. And this is sort of our date night, so—[applause].

Now, because this is an intimate setting I usually don't give a long speech, and I already gave a long speech today. So what I'd rather do is spend most of my time taking questions and