

**The White House**

Office of the Press Secretary

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**Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney****James S. Brady Press Briefing Room**

See below for an answer to a question (marked with an asterisk) posed in the briefing that required follow up.

\*The President doesn't support the ballot initiative in Ohio that would strip away fundamental collective bargaining rights.

12:39 P.M. EDT

MR. CARNEY: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to your daily briefing. It's nice to be back here, although not quite as nice as traveling around the country as we did the first three days of this week, as those of you who joined us know.

Very successful trip, where the President was able to make announcements on some of the executive actions he can take, things that he can do to move this economy forward, assist students with their student debt, with their loans, and homeowners who are struggling with refinancing their homes.

I don't have any announcements to make, so I'll go straight to questions.

Mr. Feller.

Q Thank you, Jay. Two topics today. On the statement we just got from the President about the European deal, does the White House feel that this agreement, if implemented, is enough to prevent countries around the world from plunging into a recession?

MR. CARNEY: Ben, what we have said and the President has said -- Secretary Geithner as well -- is that we believe the Europeans have the capacity to deal with this challenge. We welcome the decisions that were made last night by the European Union, which lay a critical foundation for a comprehensive, conclusive solution, the kind of solution that we've been urging them to make. And we will -- we look forward to the full development and implementation of that plan, and we'll continue to work with our counterparts there. This is an important, obviously, part of the world, and with very important impacts on the American economy.

So we look forward to working with our counterparts. We look forward to the full and rapid implementation of that plan. And we all need to work individually and collectively, as nations and allies and partners, to take the necessary measures to sustain our -- sustain the global recovery and to put our people back to work.

Q In terms of the fear of recession across the globe, how significant is this in preventing that?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I don't want to predict into the future, but it is clearly important that Europe take these actions. It has been important for -- and obvious, I think, for a number of months -- that this is a challenge that needed to be addressed. And we have been working with our counterparts to -- as they have dealt with this. And the decisions made last night were very important, and they lay the foundation for the kind of decisive, conclusive resolution to these challenges that need to happen.

Q Switching topics, quickly, to the super committee. Senate Democrats have put out a plan that includes cuts to Medicare and Social Security benefits. Is that the kind of the thing the President could endorse?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have a specific comment about a plan that -- which I don't think has been put out but has been talked about. What we believe is that the committee needs to act. It has been assigned a goal by the Congress through the Budget Control Act that was signed into law by the President. The President has put forward a plan that represents the sort of balanced approach that he believes is essential to addressing our mid- and long-term deficit challenge and debt challenge. And he hopes that the Congress will take that up, and move forward in a way that ensures that everybody gets a fair shake, that's there's a -- they share in both the prosperity and in the burden here, as we deal with our long-term deficit and debt.

What I think I can say, broadly speaking, is that what isn't the right answer is to rule out entirely, to take off the table revenues -- because there is no credible account of -- or assessment of the kind of action that we need to take that does not include a balanced approach, that does not include revenues. And to say the burden here should be borne entirely by the middle class, or by those struggling in America, while the wealthiest among us have to contribute nothing is simply out of sync, not just with the President's view, not just with Democrats' view, but independents and Republicans everywhere except in Washington.

So the President, as I said, has put forward a plan, and he looks forward to the super committee and Congress in general at taking action.

Q One last point. One of the ideas being kicked around about the super committee is that that late November deadline for action lacks teeth because the cuts wouldn't kick in until 2013. So, in effect, this process could evaporate this fall and winter, and nothing will happen. Does the White House view that deadline as "lacking teeth"?

MR. CARNEY: This is something that Congress has assigned to itself, and they need to act on it. The trigger mechanism that you talk about, the sequestration, is onerous for a reason. And it is, I think, creates the kind of pressure on Congress to act that is necessary.

But, again, the President's view is clear. The President has put forward a detailed proposal that makes clear where he thinks Congress ought to go, makes clear that a balanced approach is the way to go, which reflects the approach that the American people believe we ought to take. So I don't want to get into too much detail about the negotiations at the committee level or at the congressional level. The President clearly believes that there's not a lot of complexity or confusion about what needs to be done. It requires tough choices, but it requires tough choices by all sides. And if there's a willingness to approach this with a view towards balance, then it really shouldn't be that difficult.

Q The President has repeatedly said that there are headwinds that come from the eurozone debt crisis that have slowed the U.S. economic recovery. Does this deal diminish that risk that it could derail that recovery entirely?

MR. CARNEY: We need to do everything we can here in the United States to grow the economy and create jobs. That is the principal focus that the President has. It's what he has been talking about and acting on consistently and what you will continue to see him talk about and act on. We need to control the things that we can control.

As far as Europe goes, we have been working with our counterparts as they address that challenge, and making clear that we believe that it's significant and needs to be dealt with. And we are certainly encouraged by the important decisions that were made and look forward to working with the Europeans as they take conclusive action to deal with this -- because, as I said before, this is a very vital part of the world economically. It has an impact on the global economy and directly on the American economy.

Q The President's statement calls for rapid implementation --

MR. CARNEY: That's right.

Q -- but there are experts saying that this could take weeks, if not months, to fully implement -- get the details pinned down.

MR. CARNEY: Well, we will continue to encourage and work with our counterparts to help them move forward towards rapid and complete implementation.

Let me just, as I promised here to move around in the back. Nobody -- (laughter) -- Mr. Sitov.

Q Thank you. Our foreign minister raised a couple of interesting points in a recent interview. I wanted to ask you about them. Point one was if Americans care very much about international authorization when they go in a country like Afghanistan -- or Iraq, by the way -- even though he was speaking about Afghanistan. They need to care about reporting to the international community when they are planning to get out. So my question I guess is do you plan to make a report to the United Nations and make sure that the job is done before you leave Afghanistan?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think we've been very clear about what the President's policy is and strategy is in Afghanistan. He laid it out in great detail. And as I think he has proven with regard to Iraq, with regard to Afghanistan, with regard to going after the senior leadership in al Qaeda, he says what he's going to do and he does it. So he will keep his commitments, and those commitments include the drawdown of the surge forces in Afghanistan that is happening now and the continued drawdown that will then, by the end of '14, allow for the transfer of security lead to Afghan security forces.

So that's all been very transparent and will continue to be as we move forward.

Q Will we be assured that the flow of drugs from Afghanistan, which is the biggest problem for my country, that the Afghans themselves will be able to handle that situation?

MR. CARNEY: Well, Andrei, what I can say more broadly is that we are working towards a situation in Afghanistan where the Afghan security forces can, with increasing capability, take over the security lead in their country. Now that's -- the timeline there takes us through the end of 2014. And I think security can be construed broadly.

As you saw in Iraq, there was a gradual ceding of security control and lead to the Iraq security forces. That process occurred over a sustained period of time and was very successful, we believe. And while obviously each country is different, in this case, and the circumstances are different, and the timelines are different, we anticipate that we will be able to keep the schedule outlined by the President and keep our commitments, and keep both the

American people and the international community apprised of the progress we're making and our plans for drawing down.

Let me move on. Michael.

Q Has the President seen the footage from Oakland this week of violence between protesters and the police? And is there a concern in the White House or from the President that these Occupy protests become -- lead to violence in some way in the coming months?

MR. CARNEY: I don't know that he's seen that specific footage. He certainly is aware of the news in general and there are TVs on around here and when we travel.

We, as the President has said, understand the frustrations that have led to these demonstrations. There's a lot of concern out there about our sluggish economy, the need for it to grow faster, the fact that our unemployment rate is much too high.

There is also a lot of concern about the perception that Wall Street, writ large here, acted in a way that helped precipitate the worst financial crisis and worst economic crisis that we've seen since the Great Depression, and now, after we have passed into law and signed into law reforms that would both protect American consumers, in their dealings with financial institutions, and would ensure that the kinds of reckless actions that were taken could not be taken again, we see a lot of efforts in Congress from Republicans as well as by lobbyists for Wall Street to try to undo those reforms; to stop, for example, the confirmation of our nominee to head the Consumer Financial Protection Board -- our consumer watchdog.

As to the violence, we obviously believe and insist that everyone behave in a lawful manner, even as they're expressing, justifiably, their frustrations.

Yes.

Q Jay, sort of to follow on that, obviously the most graphic images we've seen have come from Oakland, but there's a lot of cities where leaders are becoming frustrated with the movements -- and not because of violence, but because of sort of the persistent nature of it and how it sort of disrupts I guess business and that kind of thing. There's a lot of talk of getting rid of -- pardon me, there's a lot of talk of sort of cracking down arrests, that kind of thing. Does the President think that's appropriate, or does he see that as putting a limit on expression?

MR. CARNEY: I haven't had that discussion with the President. I think, again, I would just go back to what I said to Michael. We understand the frustrations that are being expressed, specifically with regard to the need to make sure that Main Street and Wall Street operate by the same set of rules, and the general frustration with the need for jobs and economic growth that creates opportunity for middle-class Americans. And certainly we have a long and noble tradition of free expression and free speech in this country.

We also -- it's also important that laws are upheld and obeyed. But that's a broad view. I haven't had a discussion about specific cities or instances with the President.

Q But aside from lawlessness, just assembling and obviously in the sheer numbers that we're seeing, it certainly gets --

MR. CARNEY: Again, without getting into specific decisions by municipalities, city councils, mayors, I would simply say that there is a long and noble tradition in the United States of free expression and free speech.

Yes, Jake.

Q The American Academy of Pediatrics wrote a letter expressing concerns about what they call the family penalty division of the health care law -- provisions that exclude families with children from subsidized exchange coverage, even when they lack affordable employer-based coverage. I'm wondering, is the White House reviewing this part of the health care law, looking into ways to fix it or tweak it?

MR. CARNEY: Jake, I confess that I don't have an answer to you. I've heard vaguely about this, but I haven't looked into it. Maybe HHS can help you more, but I just don't have a response.

Q Okay. Speaker Boehner gave an interview earlier today to Laura Ingraham in which he expressed -- well, I'll just quote him: He said, "The idea that you're going to just go around Congress is almost laughable. We're keeping a very close eye on the administration to make sure they're following the law and following the Constitution. I've got great concerns that he may be violating parameters in terms of the executive actions that the President is taking. And our committees of jurisdiction are looking at these proposals to make sure the President isn't exceeding his authority."

Do you have any response to the Speaker's concerns?

MR. CARNEY: Well, first of all, the President is operating well within the balance of his authority, and in a way that is consistent with the kinds of executive actions that presidents have taken in previous administrations.

presidents of both parties.

I would respectfully suggest to the Speaker that perhaps he should and the House should focus on what the American people are insisting that Washington in general focus on, which is the need to grow the economy and create jobs. I think yesterday the House, amidst the demand that action be taken on jobs and the economy, bravely went forward and passed legislation or passed a bill that would issue commemorative coins for baseball, Hall of Fame; it passed overwhelmingly. And now I think they're pretty much done for the week in a couple of hours.

The President has put forward a jobs plan filled with measures that have enjoyed bipartisan support in the past, paid for in a way that is supported broadly by the American people, by Democrats, independents and Republicans everywhere except in Congress. He I think believes Congress should act on that. Because with regard to the executive actions we've made clear, as I know you know, that we do not believe for a moment that they are a substitute for legislative action. What they represent is the President's absolute commitment to doing everything he can within his authority to assist Americans as they deal with this difficult economy -- whether it's students, helping them consolidate and reduce their debt burden; helping homeowners who are struggling and underwater with their mortgages but paying their bills, helping them refinance their loans so they can take advantage of these historically low loan rates, mortgage rates.

He'll do everything he can, and you will hear from him and see him continue to take up that cause through executive actions, even as he says to Congress: Pass this bill. Pass the elements of this bill. Do things that grow the economy and create jobs.

Q Well, I guess sort of two things. One, the majority in the House of Representatives, they say they have passed anywhere between 15 and 20 bills that would have a positive impact on job growth, and the bills have not been taken up by the Senate. Do you oppose -- I mean, I understand that you oppose the ones that deregulate and some of the others, but do you oppose every single one of them?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I don't know every -- I haven't looked at all 15. But what I can tell you is the ones -- the actions that the Congress has taken that help economic growth and job creation, like the free trade agreements, like patent reform, are things that the President agrees with and has signed into law, or put a signature to in terms of the free trade agreements.

And I believe the House did today pass a provision, the so-called 3 percent withholding for government contractors provision today, that this President supported. In fact, it was part of the Recovery Act. It is removing from law -- if it gets through the entire Congress -- would remove from the law a provision that was passed under the previous administration, and voted for by Republicans, including the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader. The President has been for this repeal and would certainly look forward to signing that.

So he is working cooperatively with Republicans on the things that they agree on. I would simply, rather than take my assessment of what their jobs proposals are, just look at what independent economists say about their plans. And there's just -- there is no one out there who will say that he -- they may say that there are good policy ideas in those proposals -- policy ideas for the medium and long term -- but there are no ideas, or very few ideas, that have any measurable, positive impact in the near term on economic growth and job creation. That's not just me saying it, that's not a partisan position, that's outside economic analysts -- because it's the kind of proposals they've put forward.

They don't deal with the need right now, which is boosting aggregate demand, to use economist lingo, to get the economy growing and to get people back to work. The President's plan does that. The President also has a plan which deals with medium- and long-term deficit and debt reduction, and laying a foundation for future economic growth. You got to do all of it. You got to do it all.

Q But your bill keeps coming up, first in the whole and now in different bite-size chunks, as the President put it, and it keeps failing.

MR. CARNEY: Well, it keeps being blocked in unison by Republicans in -- and here's the thing --

Q And Democrats.

MR. CARNEY: No.

Q Democrats aren't voting to block it?

MR. CARNEY: Ninety-five to 97 percent of Democrats have voted for the American --

Q I'm just saying, a bipartisan vote to block it.

MR. CARNEY: Well, that is what the Republicans say, there's no question. But when 100 percent of --

Q It's just a fact --

MR. CARNEY: Well no. But listen --

MR. CARNEY: Well, no, but --

Q -- bipartisan vote to block it.

MR. CARNEY: I allow that 2 to 5 percent of Democrats have voted against this, whereas 95 to 97 percent have voted for the jobs bill in its entirety and the single provision that's been voted on it so far. And 100 percent, in lockstep, of Republicans have voted to block it. The fact is, if we didn't have the Senate rules that pertain now, where everything -- even if it's naming a post office -- practically needs a filibuster-proof majority, we would only need 50 or 51 to turn these things that are broadly supported by the American people into law.

But they're blocked by the Republicans -- blocked based on a principle in the Senate that was established by the Senate Republican Leader, quite a long time ago, quite explicitly, quite publicly, that his number-one priority as the Republican leader in the Senate, in the United States Congress, was not to create jobs, not to assist the American people, not to grow the economy, but to do everything he could to ensure that Barack Obama was not reelected. That doesn't seem to be the agenda that the American people support.

And I would just point out that when you see this 100 percent Republican opposition, it's totally disconnected from Republicans out in the country. It's not just Democrats out there and the President. Look, you've seen the data, probably ABC's own poll. I mean, it's -- they're out of sync with Democrats, independents, Republicans -- Americans who want Washington to act, want Washington to take common-sense measures that would help grow the economy and put people back to work -- and want them paid for so they don't add a dime to the deficit, and paid for in a way that this President has put forward.

Q So does what you say mean that the President has decided that there is no way to work with the Republicans --

MR. CARNEY: Absolutely not.

Q -- and that therefore, it's important for him to take his case campaign-style to people in states which are going to be critical for his reelection?

MR. CARNEY: I know it sticks in your craw that the President actually leaves Washington and goes out and talks to the American people --

Q Not at all. I'm just asking. (Laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: But the President believes very strongly that Republicans in Congress will not take action because he asks them to. I think that has been established over these nearly three years. What he does also believe is that Republicans in Congress will take action if their constituents demand that they do it. So that is why he is out in the country talking about the need to pass the jobs act, and why he is talking about the actions that he's taking, without Congress, because we can't wait for Congress to act -- whether it's student loans or refinancing mortgages or other things that he's done -- waivers for No Child Left Behind, or more than a billion dollars of savings through lessening regulations for hospitals and doctors. He will continue to do these things, and he'll continue to press Congress to take action.

But, again, you've heard him out there. We're being quite transparent, calling on the American people to call on Congress to do the things that the American people say they want done.

Q Yes, but perhaps you would allow that the places he chooses to make this case have some bearing on his reelection.

MR. CARNEY: Look, I think he has been around the country, including to places that are blue and purple and red, making this case. And he will continue to move around the country to states of all colors making his case.

Sam.

Q Thanks, Jay. Just kind of staying on this topic. Do you know when the last time the President spoke to the Speaker was?

MR. CARNEY: I'll have to find it for you. I think we publicly discussed it or read it out.

Q Was it when the Speaker reminded the President that they did have a jobs bill?

MR. CARNEY: I'm not sure. Again, Sam, we read it out. I'm not sure if he's talked to him since then. The conversation I'm aware of is the one that we read out, I think I did read out from here. This is the one where the President I think called to thank the Speaker for his work in getting the free trade agreements passed. And then, yes, I believe the Speaker brought up the fact that they have put forward proposals that they label jobs proposals. And we make the point that economists disagree in terms of the job creation potential in the near term.

Mr. Henry.

Q So then, following up on that phone call they had.

MR. CARNEY: A lot of follow-ups.

Q Following on a follow, the President has made his case around the country; you seem to believe there is bipartisan support for this jobs bill.

MR. CARNEY: Well, again, it's not a statement of opinion, it's a statement of fact if you believe the data.

Q Okay. So you have that data in hand. Why doesn't the President call the Speaker and other leaders, Democratic leaders, as well over here after weeks of back and forth and just say, how are we going to get this done?

MR. CARNEY: Because there is no complexity here to how we get it done. Congress needs to act. Congress needs to -- I mean, why -- the House won't even take up the provisions of the Americans Jobs Act.

Q Then why doesn't he call and say, stop passing bills to help baseball coins -- they're already done. Let's --

MR. CARNEY: There is a constituency that barely exceeds the number of people in this room that believes that the President and members of Congress need to hole up in a room together to work out what they should be doing for the American people. It is eminent --

Q But him traveling and John Boehner going on the Laura Ingraham show is not moving the ball forward, it doesn't appear. So --

MR. CARNEY: Well, I disagree. I mean, I think the Speaker would say that they passed this 3 percent withholding provision, which, again, was part of the Recovery Act -- part of the jobs act, something the President supports. Congress passed the free trade agreements, patent reform. We will have votes on every provision within the American Jobs Act, giving Republicans the opportunity in the Senate and, hopefully if they see the light in the House, an opportunity to vote on those. So we remain hopeful that Congress will act, and we note where it has acted.

Q Last thing. You haven't had a chance yet to comment on the GDP numbers. A few weeks ago the President had an interview with George Stephanopoulos and said no, the American people are not better off now than they were a few years ago, but we're working to try to fix that.

You get good GDP numbers today. Is that a step forward and suggest to you that is turning around? Or is the ultimate number just unemployment, regardless of GDP?

MR. CARNEY: 2.5 percent growth may be better than it was the previous quarter, but it is not good enough. Absolutely not good enough. We all speak enough, I think, frequently with economists to know that 2.5 percent growth does not -- while it is positive -- is not enough to significantly affect employment. We need to take action to ensure that the economy grows faster, and that more -- to ensure that more people get on the job and go back to work.

I mean, the fact is, without the American Jobs Act, if Congress does not pass any provision within the American Jobs Act, the economic prognosis for next year is growth that is too slow to bring down unemployment. Now, maybe some in Congress think that's okay. I sure know, we know, that the American people -- left, right and center -- do not think that's okay. That is why the President believes so strongly that we have to pass the jobs act, because outside economists say it would add up to 2 percent to our GDP. Add that 2 percent to what might happen otherwise and you would get hopefully the kind of economic growth that could bring down the unemployment rate. And is there any higher priority?

Q Jay, you didn't have 50 votes for the American Jobs Act. There were Democrats that voted --

MR. CARNEY: We had 51.

Q For cloture. But there were Democrats that voted --

MR. CARNEY: Well, we didn't get it further because the Republicans blocked it.

Q But there were Democrats that voted for cloture, like Webb and Lieberman, who said that they were going to vote for cloture but not for the final bill. There were not a majority of senators for the jobs act.

MR. CARNEY: Well, look, first of all, it didn't get that far. Had it gotten that far, I am -- we are absolutely confident that a majority -- the majority of the United States Senate would support the American Jobs Act as a broad majority of the American people support it.

Yes.

Q Let me get back to the essential question here. Despite the President's best efforts in 2008, voters saw fit

Q Let me get back to the essential question here. Despite the President's best efforts in 2009, voters saw fit to send Republicans to the majority in the House and make John Boehner the Speaker of the House.

MR. CARNEY: 2010, you mean.

Q 2010, right. The President sent up legislation; that same House did not see fit to pass it as one piece of legislation.

MR. CARNEY: In fact, it didn't even vote on it.

Q Okay. What give the President the right to do this by executive order? Why not --

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think -- Mike, he can --

Q I mean, in all the things --

MR. CARNEY: Where are you confused by -- he's not passing the American Jobs Act by executive --

Q Well, he's breaking out component parts, is he not?

MR. CARNEY: No, he's not. The executive actions are not pieces of the American Jobs Act. The pieces of American Jobs Act are in legislative form because they require congressional action. The things he is doing administratively through executive powers are things that he can do -- the things that do not require legislative action -- so he is exercising that power.

Q If that's the case, what took him so long?

MR. CARNEY: He has been exercising his executive authority throughout his presidency to help the economy, to help Americans. I mean, the fact is, is that it's getting more prominence now because of the obvious-to-everyone dysfunctionality of the Congress; the obstructionism that we're seeing in the face of what is clearly the number-one priority of the American people -- again, Americans left, right and center.

So, I mean, I've spoken from this podium even since I've had this job about executive actions he's taken, including prior to the refinancing announcement on Monday, the actions he took through executive authority to provide forbearance for the unemployed, to give them a better chance of staying in their homes and paying their mortgages.

So he will -- he has done, and will continue to take the kinds of actions he can, as President, without Congress, to help Americans, to help them deal with this economy, to help them deal with their debt, deal with their mortgages, through a variety of other measures that he has taken and will take.

Q Okay. And finally, when the new chief of staff came here -- I guess it was six or seven months ago -- he walked with the President across Lafayette Park to the Chamber of Commerce in an effort to mend fences, to sort of demonstrate that he was rolling back some regulations, unshackling business to help them in their efforts to get through the recession.

Six months later, the Occupy Wall Street crowd walked up from Freedom Plaza, and they weren't there to mend fences, they were there to lay siege to the place. So I'm wondering -- I mean, given these two contrasting images, is there any concern on your part that goals of Occupy Wall Street run counter to the goals of the administration in terms of your attitudes towards business and deregulation?

MR. CARNEY: I'll try to fashion an answer that takes into account all the pieces of that question.

The President remains committed to taking the kinds of actions that lessen the regulatory burden where it is appropriate to do so. As I just pointed out in my recitation of actions that he has taken administratively prior to this most recent several announcements, we have, through regulatory relief, initiated action that will save more than a billion dollars for hospitals and doctors, announced by HHS.

I would also point -- again, just starting with the first part -- point that I read a report recently in the last couple of days that, despite what you might hear from some folks, President Obama has actually issued fewer regulations than President Bush 43 at this stage in his presidency, and that the overall "burden" of those regulations is less than under President Bush.

Having said that, it is the fundamental mission of this President to lift up, secure -- help secure and give opportunity to the middle class of this country. And the frustrations you're seeing expressed broadly by the American people, as well as through these demonstrations, are frustrations that he absolutely understands, because they go right to the heart of the problem we're facing, which is economic growth that is too slow and unemployment that is too high.

Above all else, his priority is to address those problems.

Q Jay, on jobs. One of the most important issues facing organized labor these days is issue number two on the ballot on Ohio, comes up November 8th. A yes vote would affirm John Kasich's plan to gut collective bargaining; a no vote, which the unions want, would repeal it. Has the President taken a position on issue two? Does he plan to? And does he plan to go to Ohio to speak about it?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have any travel announcements to make. And I don't have a specific response on the ballot question. I do know that this President strongly supports collective bargaining rights, and you heard him take that position earlier this year with regards to what was going on in Wisconsin.\*

So I can take the question as it pertains to the Ohio ballot initiative.

Q That would seem to lead to a no on issue two?

MR. CARNEY: Again, it's a fair --

Q You could make the announcement now.

MR. CARNEY: Again, it's a fair analysis, but I don't want to -- I don't want to get ahead of that.

Yes.

Q Hey, Jay, does the tone of the statement that you all put out about the resolution of this -- or attempt to resolve this Greek debt crisis reflect the tone that the President is going to take to the G20 meeting next week?

MR. CARNEY: Yes.

Q Especially the part where he calls for the rapid implementation, as you've noted in so many of your answers today, and previously he and Congress haven't been able to implement any kind of progress on his efforts and theirs, what kind of a position is he going to be in to lecture the Europeans or to ask them to take specific actions that he thinks are right?

MR. CARNEY: There is no question that -- Peter, that enough has not been done. That is why you see and hear the President talk so passionately about the need to take action on economic growth and jobs, and the need to deal with our medium- and long-term fiscal challenges. That's why he's put forward proposals for the short, medium and long term.

I would go back to part of your question and take issue with the idea that we haven't succeeded at all with regards to some of these issues. I mean, the fact is the Recovery Act prevented a second Great Depression. It has -- it did lead to the cessation of economic contraction and a sustained period now of economic growth, albeit too slow. And it has led to 2.5 million private sector jobs being created.

Again, not enough, but some progress.

Also, working with Congress, this President has on several occasions, most recently through the Budget Control Act, taken action to cut costs, cut spending, reduce our deficits and deal with our fiscal challenges. Again, not enough, which is why the President put forward a plan that is far bolder than the minimum requirement that the super committee is operating under. But there has been some action taken with regard to this with Congress.

So the President's message to the Europeans and broadly to all the members of the G20 is that we need to work individually as countries and collectively together to ensure that we sustain and continue the global economic recovery and to put our people, broadly speaking, back to work.

Q So to what extent does he go there in any kind of a position of strength given the gridlock that is currently underway?

MR. CARNEY: Well, again, I think I took issue with the idea that while there is gridlock on jobs, we remain hopeful that that will change. And there is gridlock thus far on the current mission of the super committee, we are told or we hear, but those deadlines haven't yet come to pass, that we believe there's possibility that Congress will act and take up a balanced approach to long-term and medium-term deficit and debt reduction.

So he carries with him to France the fact that we are pushing our Congress to act on these matters, and he comes as the leader of the largest economy in the world and a great friend and ally of a great many nations, so I think we continue to have a significant leading role to play at the G20 and other international fora.

Q If I could just stay on that real quick, it says, "look forward to the full development," does the -- of the plan -- the White House feel like it has enough details of what they actually agreed to?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think that work needs to be done. I mean, these are significant, important decisions that were made, and we look forward to sort of the full development of them and then the rapid implementation of them.

Q But in terms of the flow of information, do you guys have a good sense of what was agreed to there? Are

Q But in terms of the flow of information, do you guys have a good sense of what was agreed to there? Are you hungry for more details?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think we're satisfied with the fact that we have good communication with our friends and allies and partners in Europe, but I would suggest you ask the Treasury Department about more detailed communications that might be going on.

Yes.

Q Yes. I spoke with Harry Reid's office yesterday, who said they have no indication from Senate Republicans that the infrastructure bill taken from the President's jobs act, possibly up for a vote next week -- they've received no indications that they would be in favor of it. As this point, especially as the President moves forward on executive orders, are these votes just symbolic? What's the point now?

MR. CARNEY: I will go back to some of what I've said before: These are provisions, broadly and specifically with regards to infrastructure, that Republicans have traditionally supported broadly.

Republicans who vote against it will have to explain to their constituents why they used to be for it and now they're against it. And are they against it because they don't think millionaires and billionaires ought to pay a little bit more to help put people back to work? I think that's a tough argument to make.

Again, it's not up to the President -- he does not believe that simply by asking Republicans to do this that they will do it. He is certainly wise enough to understand that that will not be the case.

What he does hope and believe is that senators and members of the House will hear enough from their constituents and get enough pressure from their constituents to take action that that uniform resistance will break down. So we remain hopeful. We are a week, at least I believe, away from a vote on infrastructure and maybe the outlook will change. After all, we'll get a majority -- or we'll get the 50 or 51. If a few Republicans see the light and decide that it is actually worth asking millionaires and billionaires to pay a little bit more to put construction workers back on the job rebuilding our schools and highways and bridges, which in and of itself is a good thing, but also helps create the kind of foundation that we need for further economic growth in the 21st century, then maybe we'll get to 60 and maybe we'll actually pass that measure. Then we move on to the next one.

And hopefully, Republicans will agree to something here because there is no more urgent priority. I confess I was a little surprised to hear from some Republicans -- not in Congress but some Republicans -- that they don't support extension of the payroll tax cut. So they're for protecting tax breaks for millionaires, but they're also for raising taxes on the middle class? That's a new and novel position and probably unsustainable with their constituents.

Ann.

Q Is a threat of a double-dip recession over with the GDP numbers this morning?

MR. CARNEY: I'm the wrong guy to ask in terms of economic analysis of that kind. What we know is what I said earlier when I was asked about the GDP numbers is that 2.5 percent is better than we had in the previous quarter and the quarter before that, but it is not good enough by a long shot. That's why we need to take action to further boost growth and job creation because I know enough about economics to know that 2.5 percent is not enough to bring down the unemployment rate in any sustained way, and we need to take action to put people back to work. So we need more than 2.5 percent growth.

Yes, Paula.

Q Yesterday, the House Ways and Means Committee came out with an international tax reform proposal, and supporters say it would actually result in creating jobs at home, but opponents say it would actually encourage multinationals to shift jobs overseas. So what is the White House position?

MR. CARNEY: I'll have to take that question. I'm not familiar with -- you say it's a bill that's been put forward?

Q Camp -- Camp put it out.

MR. CARNEY: I'll have to look at that. I don't -- I'm not -- I don't have a reaction to it yet.

Yes. Voice of America.

Q Thank you. Thanks, Jay.

MR. CARNEY: And then Chris.

Q Syria, number one, very quickly. Has the President met with Ambassador Ford, assuming he's still here? Are there plans for him to meet with Ambassador Ford?

MR. CARNEY: I don't know of any plans. Obviously the President was out of town the last three days. I don't know of any plans to meet him, but I'll check on that for you.

Q Quickly on Iran. Secretary Clinton in a broadcast interview this week said that there seems to be a move in Iran towards a more military takeover, in effect, inside Iran. I know the President had some comments about the Saudi plot at the press conference. But is that a description that he would comfortably use to describe the political situation in Iran?

MR. CARNEY: Rather than adopt that language I would simply say that the leadership in Iran is hypocritical with regards to the Arab Spring and has consistently taken actions that do not suggest that they will fulfill their international obligations. And we are very mindful of that.

Alexis, and then Jackie, and then Chris.

Q Jay, I just want to --

MR. CARNEY: Sorry, Alexis, Chris, Jackie.

Q I just want to clarify to understand. The President has been talking about the jobs act for about six weeks and been out there around the country. I just want to make sure I understand, you all believe there is evidence that going out there and providing pressure from the outside in is showing some results among the electorate?

MR. CARNEY: Well, here's --

Q I want to make sure what --

MR. CARNEY: Sure. I think so. There's been polls that demonstrate that pretty significantly. I think another poll that shows how out of sync Republicans in Congress are with the mainstream is the recent one that showed a historic low -- 9 percent approval rating for Congress. I mean, I know nine is a popular number in the Republican Party, but this can't possibly be -- (laughter) -- the kind of nine that they want. Nine, nine, nine, nine. (Laughter.)

No, I think at some point -- we think at some point, we certainly hope that the pressure that is mounting up there, out there, will be felt by members of Congress who seem to be content to deal with commemorative coins for Hall of Fame baseball players, which is something I support, but not ahead of creating jobs or growing the economy.

So yes, we believe there is progress being made.

Q So what is the risk, in the President's view? What is the risk to those Republicans if they are ignoring what you believe is very evident?

MR. CARNEY: They have to answer to their constituents. They're here because they were elected to serve the people in their districts and states. And, again, you only have to look at what those people are saying all around the country to know that there is great dissatisfaction with the dysfunctionality in Congress, with the failure of Congress to address the concerns that the American people have.

And that kind of pressure, from the grassroots up, is the kind of pressure that usually gets Congress to act. Hopefully it will be so this time.

Chris.

Q Thanks, Jay. Amid all this talk about jobs, LGBT Americans are particularly concerned about their own job security because of the lack of federal nondiscrimination protections.

Right now, it's currently legal to -- perfectly legal to fire someone for being gay in 29 states, and fire someone for being transgender in 35 states. The President has endorsed legislation that will institute federal nondiscrimination protections, but does the administration see this problem as part of the larger jobs issue?

MR. CARNEY: Well, look, you mention what the President has endorsed, and his -- he believes that the LGBT community should absolutely not be discriminated against with regards to jobs or anything else.

So the -- but there is a broad problem that affects all Americans, and that is 9.1 percent unemployment and 2.5 percent GDP growth, which is good but not nearly good enough. So he is focused on doing what he can to take measures that will help the economy grow and create jobs.

Q If the President thinks this is a problem, why wasn't this issue addressed as part of the American Jobs Act? Why isn't he talking about this problem as he makes a case about jobs around the country?

MR. CARNEY: The President is out there making the case about jobs broadly every day -- much, apparently, to the annoyance of some folks in Congress, but he will keep doing it. And he will keep doing it unless and until every American who's looking for a job gets one.

And if that doesn't happen, then you'll continue to hear him talking about it.

Jackie. I'm sorry. Jackie.

Q Can you describe how the President gets his information about the Occupy wherever movement? Has it become institutionalized as a part of any briefing as it's spread? Are there people designated to sort of stay on top of it, to try to talk to people associated with it?

MR. CARNEY: That last part -- not that I'm aware of. And the President gets his information about it through you. I mean, he -- there's substantial coverage about it, and the President -- sorry to the folks in the front row -- doesn't watch a lot of TV news, but he does read a lot of news. (Laughter.) He's old school that way. But he watches some.

I mean, look, he catches it. He is very current on those developments. But there's no organized or mechanized way that he's -- that those issues are brought to him, because they're right there, obviously, in front of him when he reads the newspaper or -- on his iPad, or catches it sometimes on the television in the Outer Oval.

Q And on a separate issue of keeping tabs on things, who in the White House -- how are you keeping up with the super committee? Are you trying to influence its deliberations?

MR. CARNEY: We have tried to influence its deliberations by putting forward a plan -- a complete, comprehensive, balanced plan -- that are -- that basically are recommendations that this President has put forward for the super committee to consider.

They have to act. It is -- this is a congressional committee mandated by an act of Congress with a target set by Congress -- a target that the President's plan would far exceed. But he encourages them to look at his proposals, because he believes very strongly that they represent the kind of approach that will both deal with the problem for the medium and long term, and also the kind of approach that is broadly supported by the American people, because it is balanced and fair.

Q So there's no more involvement than that in this period of --

MR. CARNEY: Well, we have our communications with Congress in general, but we're not -- this is a committee on which there are no members of the executive branch sitting. This is a congressional committee, and obviously they are engaged in trying to reach an agreement that will at least meet the target set by the legislation and, we certainly hope, exceed it, as long as it's done in a balanced way.

Q Thanks, Jay.

MR. CARNEY: Thank you all, very much. Have a great rest of the day.

END 1:29 P.M. EDT