

Statement by the President

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Rose Garden

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THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. Yesterday, before votes were tallied, I shot a video that some of you may have seen in which I said to the American people: Regardless of which side you were on in the election, regardless of whether your candidate won or lost, the sun would come up in the morning.

And that is one bit of prognosticating that actually came true. The sun is up. And I know everybody had a long night. I did, as well. I had a chance to talk to President-elect Trump last night -- about 3:30 in the morning, I think it was -- to congratulate him on winning the election. And I had a chance to invite him to come to the White House tomorrow to talk about making sure that there is a successful transition between our presidencies.

Now, it is no secret that the President-elect and I have some pretty significant differences. But remember, eight years ago, President Bush and I had some pretty significant differences. But President Bush's team could not have been more professional or more gracious in making sure we had a smooth transition so that we could hit the ground running. And one thing you realize quickly in this job is that the presidency, and the vice presidency, is bigger than any of us.

So I have instructed my team to follow the example that President Bush's team set eight years ago, and work as hard as we can to make sure that this is a successful transition for the President-elect -- because we are now all rooting for his success in uniting and leading the country. The peaceful transition of power is one of the hallmarks of our democracy. And over the next few months, we are going to show that to the world.

Now, everybody is sad when their side loses an election. But the day after, we have to remember that we're actually all on one team. This is an intramural scrimmage. We're not Democrats first. We're not Republicans first. We are Americans first. We're patriots first. We all want what's best for this country. That's what I heard in Mr. Trump's remarks last night. That's what I heard when I spoke to him directly. And I was heartened by that. That's what the country needs -- a sense of unity; a sense of inclusion; a respect for our institutions, our way of life, rule of law; and a respect for each other. I hope that he maintains that spirit throughout this transition, and I certainly hope that's how his presidency has a chance to begin.

So this was a long and hard-fought campaign. A lot of our fellow Americans are exultant today. A lot of Americans are less so. But that's the nature of campaigns. That's the nature of democracy. It is hard, and sometimes contentious and noisy, and it's not always inspiring.

But to the young people who got into politics for the first time, and may be disappointed by the results, I just want you to know, you have to stay encouraged. Don't get cynical. Don't ever think you can't make a difference. As Secretary Clinton said this morning, fighting for what is right is worth it.

Sometimes you lose an argument. Sometimes you lose an election. The path that this country has taken has never been a straight line. We zig and zag, and sometimes we move in ways that some people think is forward and others think is moving back. And that's okay. I've lost elections before. Joe hasn't. (Laughter.) But you know.

The point, though, is, is that we all go forward, with a presumption of good faith in our fellow citizens -- because that presumption of good faith is essential to a vibrant and functioning democracy. That's how this country has moved

forward for 240 years. It's how we've pushed boundaries and promoted freedom around the world. That's how we've expanded the rights of our founding to reach all of our citizens. It's how we have come this far.

And that's why I'm confident that this incredible journey that we're on as Americans will go on. And I am looking forward to doing everything that I can to make sure that the next President is successful in that. I have said before, I think of this job as being a relay runner -- you take the baton, you run your best race, and hopefully, by the time you hand it off you're a little further ahead, you've made a little progress. And I can say that we've done that, and I want to make sure that handoff is well-executed, because ultimately we're all on the same team.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody. (Applause.)