

# Obama says attack won't rattle U.S. during Las Vegas stop

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Appearing somber, President Barack Obama on Wednesday opened a campaign visit to Las Vegas by remembering four Americans who died in an attack on a U.S. Consulate in Libya, saying they gave their lives to uphold American values of freedom in a dangerous land.

"We are mindful of their sacrifice," Obama said, adding he wanted to start his speech by talking about "the tough day we had today." "We want to send our heartfelt prayers to their loved ones."

Obama vowed the United States would bring those responsible to justice.

"No act of violence will shake the resolve of the United States of America," Obama said to cheers from a crowd of 8,000 crammed inside the Cashman Center, which can seat up to 10,000 people.

The 30-minute rally, which went from somber reflection to boisterous cheers, ended a day of crisis for the president after the U.S. ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, and three other Americans were killed Tuesday evening in Benghazi, possibly by extremists angry over a film they felt denigrated the Prophet Muhammad.

The attack prompted Obama to visit the State Department on Wednesday morning and to delay his three-hour campaign stop in Las Vegas for about one hour. He then traveled to Colorado on Wednesday night.

## OBAMA CRITICIZES REPUBLICANS

Obama initially tempered his remarks, although he grew animated as he contrasted his accomplishments with his GOP opponent, Mitt Romney, who criticized the White House handling of protests in Libya and Egypt.

The president acknowledged Nevada had been hit hardest in the nation by the recession, which he said he inherited from former President George W. Bush. But Obama said the path to a full economic recovery isn't returning to GOP policies, but continuing his efforts to restore the middle class.

"I don't think the best answers to today's new challenges are old sales pitches," Obama said to loud cheers. "And that's what my opponent and the other side is trying to sell."

Obama said Romney wants to give tax cuts to the wealthy, while the president wants to make those earning \$250,000 a year or more pay higher taxes to fund education, energy and infrastructure projects that could put people back to work. Nevada has a 12 percent unemployment rate, the highest in the nation.

"We believe the economy grows from the middle out, not the top down," said Obama, wearing a white shirt with no suit jacket. "That's why I'm running for a second term."

The crowd of supporters interrupted Obama several times to chant, "Four more years!" They booed several times when the president spoke of Romney and Republican policies.

Obama mocked Romney for his ideas about reforming Medicare and Social Security.

"I will never turn Medicare into a voucher," the president said.

On Social Security, Obama said he would not "turn it over to Wall Street like a stack of poker chips," referring to proposals to privatize the system.

The president seemed to gather strength throughout his speech until he had supporters screaming when he asked them to return him to the White House. He argued he had kept promises, including ending the war in Iraq.

"We've come too far to turn back now," Obama said, leaning into the podium to be heard. "We've got more troops to bring home. ...And we've got more doors of opportunity to open for everybody."

## SUPPORTERS SHOW UP IN FORCE

The Obama rally, which displayed the president in his role as commander-in-chief, came nearly four years to the day that Obama excited a crowd of 11,000 at an outdoor rally at Cashman Field on Sept. 17, 2008.

Nearly all of the crowd were diehard Obama supporters, although at least a few were undecided voters who had come to hear the president make his case for four more years.

Debbie and Roger Williamson, who recently moved to Nevada from New Jersey, said they were Republicans who did not vote for Obama in 2008 but were considering him over Romney. Debbie Williamson said she liked the president's health care law, although she remains skeptical "about how he's going to pay for it."

As for Romney, the couple said they're waiting to hear more detail from the former Bain Capital chief and Massachusetts governor on exactly how he aims to fix the economy faster than Obama.

"I don't know enough about his real plans yet," Debbie Williamson said of Romney. "We need to learn more."

The couple and others gathered to hear Obama said they didn't find it off-putting that he held a political rally despite the shocking death of Americans abroad, including the first U.S. ambassador killed since 1979.

"Bad things happen around the world every day," Roger Williamson said.

Wednesday's visit is Obama's seventh trip to Nevada this year and the 14th of his presidency. It came a day after Romney addressed the National Guard convention in Reno on the 9/11 anniversary.

Both men are focusing on Nevada as one of eight or nine battlegrounds that will decide who wins the White House. The rallies are aimed at driving up voter registration, volunteering and enthusiasm.

Karlotta Moss, an Obama supporter who voted for him in 2008, attended the rally with two of her daughters, ages 9 and 19, and her 3-year-old granddaughter. Brittanie, the 19-year-old mother, said she doesn't plan to vote for Obama or anyone else on Nov. 6.

"My vote don't count," she said as her mother shrugged. "No president can control the world - not Obama or, what's his name, Romney. I just came to get out of the house."

## TAXES AND HOUSING ISSUES

On the day of his visit, the Obama campaign released a TV ad attacking Romney for not saying how he would pay for \$5 trillion in tax cuts that would largely benefit the wealthy. The ad cites a study that suggests Romney would have to cut popular tax

deductions for the middle class, raising the average tax bill by \$2,000.

The Romney campaign responded to Obama's visit by focusing on conflicting comments he made about the housing crisis, which has hit Nevada harder than any other state with record home foreclosures. The Obama refinancing programs he has rolled out in the past couple of years haven't helped many Nevadans save their homes.

In an interview aired Wednesday on CBS Evening News, Obama said he put forward programs to address the collapsing housing market in his first year in office "that we thought would get more take up." That contradicts reporting in a new book by Bob Woodward, who quoted the president as telling a Washington lawmaker, "We will not roll out an aggressive housing plan" as part of the \$800 billion stimulus bill in 2009.

"President Obama's revisionist history on housing is laughable," Romney campaign spokesman Mason Harrison, said in a statement. "Tonight, he told Americans that he pursued steps to aid the housing market, yet it was reported just this week that the president also said 'We will not roll out an aggressive housing plan.' "

"As Nevadans have faced foreclosure, declining home values and seen their hard-earned wealth wiped away, they will not buy the president's spin and will hold him to account for his failed record," he added.

Romney himself is vulnerable on the housing issue in Nevada. Last year, he told the Las Vegas Review-Journal editorial board that the market should be allowed to "hit bottom" before a recovery could start.

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