

One day later, the president was more temperate, saying that he did not intend to "vilify" any company or industry and that he appreciated existing efforts to increase lending, such as reviewing rejected applications to see whether loans can be approved. The president suggested Monday that banks should review applications three and four times if necessary.

Bankers also emerged from the meeting in a conciliatory mood, saying they share the administration's goals.

"Every bank in that room talked about adding many, many small-business originators and setting very aggressive goals for small-business lending next year," said Richard Davis, chief executive of US Bancorp.

Bank of America plans to increase small-business lending by \$5 billion next year. J.P. Morgan Chase has committed to an increase of \$4 billion.

"This is simply what a bank should do," J.P. Morgan chief executive Jamie Dimon said in a statement released before the meeting.

This is the second time the president has convened bank executives to urge increased lending. The first meeting, in March, did little to slow the slide. The president said Monday that he continues to get "too many letters from small businesses who explain that they are creditworthy and banks that they've had a long-term relationship with are still having problems giving them loans." But the White House on Monday deflected the value of the rhetoric.

"I think that the bully pulpit can be a powerful thing," said press secretary Robert Gibbs.

Obama said he also discussed the need for financial reform, urging the bank executives not to lobby against proposals such as the creation of an agency to protect borrowers from lending abuses. And the president said he once again urged moderation in executive compensation.

"I made it clear that it is both in the country's interest and ultimately in the financial industry's interest to have updated rules of the road to prevent abuse and excess," Obama said afterward. "I have no intention of letting their lobbyists thwart reforms."

Bank executives, however, say that they strongly favor reform—they just differ with the administration about some of the particulars.

The guest list for the meeting included the top executives of 12 of the nation's largest banks, but there were three late scratches. Goldman Sachs's Lloyd C. Blankfein, John Mack of Morgan Stanley and Citigroup's Richard Parsons participated in the meeting by telephone because the flight all three had planned to take from New York to Washington was delayed by fog.

AMERICANS MAKE THIS COUNTRY GREAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, at the close of 2009, as we look to and prepare for a new year, I'm prompted to call attention to the remarkable American people who have, once again, weathered a difficult year with dignity and toughness. Sometimes the Washington establishment forgets that the solutions to America's problems lie outside this capital city.

Yes, Americans from almost every walk of life are tightening their belts

and making due with less this year, but Americans continue to be an extraordinarily resourceful people who inspire me in my work every day.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, entering in a new year, I hope we can all draw inspiration from the American people. We live in a Nation of innovators and hardworking entrepreneurs. Their resourcefulness is unlimited. The spirit of American opportunity lives and thrives among them.

And let's not forget the North Carolinians who, with their characteristic generosity and work ethic, illustrate the greatness at work in America, even in seasons of considerable difficulty. I look to them as a source of inspiration and hope. People like those who call North Carolina home have always been the best hope for the preservation of our tradition of individual liberty and government by and for the people, whether in good times or bad.

Mr. Speaker, Washington would do well to stop and watch, listen, and learn from everyday Americans as they go about their lives and do the things that help make our Nation great.

May God continue to bless us all.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICANS WANT THEIR COUNTRY BACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we end the month, the year, the decade, this session of Congress, some observations:

Fifteen million Americans are unemployed. We have 10 percent unemployment and higher throughout the United States.

Spending is totally out of control. The country is broke, so we borrow money from China and Japan, and it seems they own our Nation. And the taxrats have not seen a tax bill they didn't believe in.

Domestic policy is simple: Spend money, spend money we don't have, then borrow it, and then raise taxes on the American people.

The government's financial system is also simple: If it moves, tax it; if it keeps moving, regulate it; and if it stops moving, then subsidize it. Today we raised the debt ceiling so more

money can be spent as soon as we get back in January. Now we're over \$12 trillion in debt.

The House has turned our Nation's health care over to the government. You know, the government who tried to run a health care vaccine program that was a total failure, where school kids didn't get the vaccine while Wall Street fat cats did. And yet the Federal Government wants to now run America's health.

The House voted on a cap-and-trade tax bill that will add a tax on energy consumption for all Americans and punish energy consumption and encourage domestic oil producers to go somewhere else.

Congress has given more money away to foreign countries that hate us while ignoring problems at home.

Many Members of Congress have already left on planes, headed to Denmark to talk about how we must control the climate because man is the evildoer and scourge of the Earth. Of course, the Al Gore warmers have been caught this year hiding data that shows reasonable minds disagree with their theory of global warming. Plus, the warmers want to force Americans to spend millions of dollars to implement changes on their yet unproven theories.

The government, in essence, has taken over Wall Street, the financial industry, the automobile industry. You know, General Motors needs to change its name to Government Motors. The Federal Government has taken over the mortgage industry, the banks, and the salaries of some executives.

More American freedom and liberty has been stolen from us, and more assaults on the Constitution have occurred than at any time in our history. And today, the radical open border crowd has announced new legislation, arrogantly demanding amnesty for millions of illegals in this country with, also, visa preferences for those nations with the most foreigners in the United States. So much for border security.

We have a new military strategy that's implemented. It's called the surge and retreat plan. That strategy is in Afghanistan where we're going to surge and send a bunch of troops in, but yet in 18 months, according to the administration, they're coming home. No strategy like that has ever been used in military history before.

And of course Gitmo, down there in Cuba where we house terrorists, it's getting a new ZIP Code. We're moving it to the United States and putting it in Illinois. And of course the country has seen that we've prosecuted our Navy SEALs and given rides to terrorists.

What an odd year it's been. It is the arrogance of power that says government is the answer to everything. Our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor have been turned over to government opportunists. Reagan said that government is the problem, not the answer, and I agree with him.