

Obama sees global fight for U.S. jobs

By Sheryl Gay Stolber, New York Times

WASHINGTON – President Obama challenged Americans on Tuesday night to unleash their creative spirit, set aside their partisan differences and come together around a common goal of outcompeting other nations in a rapidly shifting global economy.

In a State of the Union address to a newly divided Congress, Mr. Obama outlined what he called a plan to “win the future” – a blueprint for spending in critical areas like education, high-speed rail, clean-energy technology and high-speed Internet to help the United States weather the unsettling impact of globalization and the challenge from emerging powers like China and India.

“The rules have changed,” he said.

But at the same time he proposed budget-cutting measures, including a five-year freeze in spending on some domestic programs that he said would reduce the deficit by \$400 billion over 10 years.

Drawing a stark contrast between himself and Republicans, who are advocating immediate and deep cuts in spending, Mr. Obama laid out a philosophy of a government that could be more efficient but would still be necessary if the nation was to address fundamental challenges at home and abroad.

“We need to out-innovate, outeducate and outbuild the rest of the world,” he said. “We have to make America the best place on earth to do business. We need to take responsibility for our deficit and reform our government. That’s how our people will prosper.”

Just weeks after the shooting in Tucson that claimed six lives and left Representative Gabrielle Giffords, Democrat of Arizona, gravely injured, Mr. Obama received a reception that was muted and civil.

There were no boos or a shout of “You lie!” as in speeches past. Many Republicans and Democrats sat side by side – the first time anyone here can remember such mixing – and nearly all wore black-and-white lapel ribbons in honor of the dead and injured. Ms. Giffords’s colleagues held a seat open for her.

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