

worked so hard and come so far just to watch history. You came here to make history. Together, that's what we can do. Together, that's what we must do. That's what we're already beginning to do.

I am absolutely confident that if all of us work together, if all of us support the extraordinary efforts of the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, if you support the efforts of this administration to finally fix our immigration system and put our kids into college and make sure that folks can stay in their homes and that job opportunities exist for everybody and not just some, if we can lift the tone of the debate so that we're not scoring political points just by turning on each other, but we're instead scoring points for all of America by solving problems, if that's our attitude, nothing can stop us. Think about how far we have come. But we

have so much more to do. We have so much more—such a longer road to travel. It's going to be up to all of you. And I am grateful for the opportunity to be your partner in this extraordinary journey.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:09 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Marc Anthony and his wife Jennifer Lopez; and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 17. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Missile Defense Systems in Europe *September 17, 2009*

Good morning. As Commander in Chief, I'm committed to doing everything in my power to advance our national security, and that includes strengthening our defenses against any and all threats to our people, our troops, and our friends and allies around the world.

And one of those threats is the danger posed by ballistic missiles. As I said during the campaign, President Bush was right that Iran's ballistic missile program poses a significant threat. And that's why I'm committed to deploying strong missile defense systems which are adaptable to the threats of the 21st century.

The best way to responsibly advance our security and the security of our allies is to deploy a missile defense system that best responds to the threats that we face and that utilizes technology that is both proven and cost effective.

In keeping with that commitment and a congressionally mandated review, I ordered a comprehensive assessment of our missile defense program in Europe. And after an extensive process, I have approved the unanimous recommendations of my Secretary of Defense and my Joint Chiefs of Staff to strengthen America's defenses against ballistic missile attack.

This new approach will provide capabilities sooner, build on proven systems, and offer greater defenses against the threat of missile attack than the 2007 European missile defense program.

This decision was guided by two principal factors. First, we have updated our intelligence assessment of Iran's missile programs, which emphasizes the threat posed by Iran's short- and medium-range missiles, which are capable of reaching Europe. There's no substitute for Iran complying with its international obligations regarding its nuclear program, and we, along with our allies and partners, will continue to pursue strong diplomacy to ensure that Iran lives up to these international obligations. But this new ballistic missile defense program will best address the threat posed by Iran's ongoing ballistic missile defense program.

Second, we have made specific and proven advances in our missile defense technology, particularly with regard to land- and sea-based interceptors and the sensors that support them. Our new approach will therefore deploy technologies that are proven and cost effective and that counter the current threat, and do so sooner than the previous program. Because our

approach will be phased and adaptive, we will retain the flexibility to adjust and enhance our defenses as the threat and technology continue to evolve.

To put it simply, our new missile defense architecture in Europe will provide stronger, smarter, and swifter defenses of American forces and America's allies. It is more comprehensive than the previous program, it deploys capabilities that are proven and cost effective, and it sustains and builds upon our commitment to protect the U.S. homeland against long-range ballistic missile threats, and it ensures and enhances the protection of all our NATO allies.

Now, this approach is also consistent with NATO missile—NATO's missile defense efforts and provides opportunities for enhanced international collaboration going forward. We will continue to work cooperatively with our close friends and allies, the Czech Republic and Poland, who had agreed to host elements of the previous program. I've spoken to the Prime Ministers of both the Czech Republic and Poland about this decision and reaffirmed our deep and close ties. Together, we are committed to a broad range of cooperative efforts to strengthen our collective defense, and we are bound by the solemn commitment of NATO's Article 5 that an attack on one is an attack on all.

We've also repeatedly made clear to Russia that its concerns about our previous missile defense programs were entirely unfounded. Our clear and consistent focus has been the threat posed by Iran's ballistic missile program, and that continues to be our focus and the basis of the program that we're announcing today.

In confronting that threat, we welcome Russians' cooperation to bring its missile defense capabilities into a broader defense of our common strategic interests, even as we continue to—we continue our shared efforts to end Iran's illicit nuclear program.

Now, going forward, my administration will continue to consult closely with Congress and with our allies as we deploy this system, and we will rigorously evaluate both the threat posed by ballistic missiles and the technology that we are developing to counter it. I'm confident that with the steps we've taken today, we have strengthened America's national security and enhanced our capacity to confront 21st-century threats.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jan Fischer of the Czech Republic; and Prime Minister Donald Tusk of Poland.

Remarks at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland September 17, 2009

The President. Thank you, College Park. Thank you so much. It is good to be back at the University of Maryland. I want to start by wishing "The Fridge" and the Terps good luck on the game this weekend. Maybe I'll even rub Testudo's nose before I leave.

We've got a number of extraordinary elected officials who are here. I just want to introduce them real quick. Your Governor, Martin O'Malley, is in the house. The two outstanding

Senators from Maryland, Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin, are in the house. One of the finest leaders that we have in Congress, Steny Hoyer, is in the house. Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown is here. Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson is here. Mayor Stephen Brayman is here. State Senate Majority Leader Tom Miller is in the house. Congresswoman Donna Edwards is here; Congressman Elijah Cummings; Congressman