

der and excitement while maybe learning a little bit at the same time.

And finally, as President, I'm going to try to do my part. We've held science-themed events like astronomy night here at the White House. That was very fun, by the way. [*Laughter*] We're planning an annual science fair to honor the student winners of national science and technology competitions. Secretary Duncan and I will be working to promote the teaching profession to show young people that teaching is one of the best and most rewarding ways to serve our country. And we are of course recognizing the folks in this room with awards for excellence in teaching and mentoring.

It's with these men and women that I'd like to conclude today, because in the end, the work that you do and the difference you make are what all these reforms are all about. Whether it's showing students how to record the habits of a resident reptile or teaching kids to test soil samples on a class trip to Costa Rica, whether it's helping young people from tough neighborhoods in Chicago to become junior paleontologists or creating a mentoring program that connects engineering students with girls and minorities, who are traditionally underserved in the field, all of you are demonstrating why teaching and mentoring is so important, and why we have to support you, equip you, and send in some reinforcements for you.

Every person in this room remembers a teacher or mentor that made a difference in their lives. Every person in this room remembers a moment in which an educator showed them something about the world, or something

about themselves, that changed their lives. It could be a word of encouragement, a helping hand, a lesson that sparked a question that ignited a passion and ultimately may have propelled a career. And innovators, folks like Michael Dell who are here today, are made in those moments. Scientists and engineers are made in those moments; doctors are made in those moments; teachers are made in those moments, those small interactions.

So yes, improving our schools is about training a new generation of workers and succeeding in new industries. But a good education, provided with the help of great teachers and mentors, is about something more. It's about instilling in a young person a love of learning and a sense of possibility in their own lives, an understanding of the world around them that will serve them no matter what they do. That's what we have to do as a nation. That's what all of you do every day. And that's what, at root, will lead to greater opportunities and brighter horizons for the next generation and for generations to come.

So thank you very much everybody. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara Stoflet, recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching; President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea; Mayor Han Zheng of Shanghai, China; and Michael S. Dell, founder and member of the board of directors, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

Statement on Senator Christopher J. Dodd's Decision Not To Seek Reelection *January 6, 2010*

From his time as a young Peace Corps volunteer to his five terms in the United States Senate, Chris Dodd has devoted his life to public service. Over the years, he has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of our children and families, support good jobs for hard-working Americans, and keep our Nation strong and prosperous, building a remarkable record of achieve-

ment for the people of Connecticut and our country. While his work in the Senate is not yet finished, his leadership in that institution will be missed.

Michelle and I extend our thanks to Senator Dodd for his service to our Nation and offer our best wishes for the future to him and his family.

Remarks on Improving Homeland Security *January 7, 2010*

Good afternoon, everybody. The immediate reviews that I ordered after the failed Christmas terrorist attack are now complete. I was just briefed on the findings and recommendations for reform, and I believe it's important that the American people understand the new steps that we're taking to prevent attacks and keep our country safe.

This afternoon my Counterterrorism and Homeland Security Adviser, John Brennan, will discuss his review into our terrorist watch list system, how our Government failed to connect the dots in a way that would have prevented a known terrorist from boarding a plane for America, and the steps we're going to take to prevent that from happening again.

Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano will discuss her review of aviation screening, technology, and procedures, how that terrorist boarded a plane with explosives that could have killed nearly 300 innocent people, and how we'll strengthen aviation security going forward.

So today I want to just briefly summarize their conclusions and the steps that I've ordered to address them. In our ever-changing world, America's first line of defense is timely, accurate intelligence that is shared, integrated, analyzed, and acted upon quickly and effectively. That's what the intelligence reforms after the 9/11 attacks largely achieved. That's what our intelligence community does every day. But unfortunately, that's not what happened in the lead-up to Christmas Day. It's now clear that shortcomings occurred in three broad and compounding ways.

First, although our intelligence community had learned a great deal about the Al Qaida affiliate in Yemen called Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula—that we knew that they sought to strike the United States, and that they were recruiting operatives to do so—the intelligence community did not aggressively follow up on and prioritize particular streams of intelligence related to a possible attack against the homeland.

Second, this contributed to a larger failure of analysis, a failure to connect the dots of intelligence that existed across our intelligence community and which together could have revealed that Abdulmutallab was planning an attack.

Third, this in turn fed into shortcomings in the watch-listing system, which resulted in this person not being placed on the no-fly list, thereby allowing him to board that plane in Amsterdam for Detroit.

In sum, the U.S. Government had the information—scattered throughout the system—to potentially uncover this plot and disrupt the attack. Rather than a failure to collect or share intelligence, this was a failure to connect and understand the intelligence that we already had.

Now, that's why we took swift action in the immediate days following Christmas, including reviewing and updating the terrorist watch list system and adding more individuals to the no-fly list and directing our Embassies and consulates to include current visa information in their warnings of individuals with terrorist or suspected terrorist ties.

Today I'm directing a series of additional corrective steps across multiple agencies. Broadly speaking, they fall into four areas.

First, I'm directing that our intelligence community immediately begin assigning specific responsibility for investigating all leads on high-priority threats so that these leads are pursued and acted upon aggressively, not just most of the time, but all of the time. We must follow the leads that we get, and we must pursue them until plots are disrupted. And that means assigning clear lines of responsibility.

Second, I'm directing that intelligence reports, especially those involving potential threats to the United States, be distributed more rapidly and more widely. We can't sit on information that could protect the American people.

Third, I'm directing that we strengthen the analytical process, how our analysis—how our analysts process and integrate the intelligence