

Presidents Alfredo Cristiani and Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador; and Archbishop

Jose Luis Escobar Alas of San Salvador, El Salvador.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem, Israel

March 23, 2011

I condemn in the strongest possible terms the bombing in Jerusalem today, as well as the rockets and mortars fired from Gaza in recent days. Together with the American people, I offer my deepest condolences for those injured or killed. There is never any possible justification for terrorism. The United States calls on the groups responsible to end these attacks at

once, and we underscore that Israel, like all nations, has a right to self-defense. We also express our deepest condolences for the deaths of Palestinian civilians in Gaza yesterday. We stress the importance of calm and urge all parties to do everything in their power to prevent further violence and civilian casualties.

Remarks at a Celebration of Greek Independence Day

March 25, 2011

The President. Well, good evening, everybody.

Audience members. Good evening.

The President. *Kalispera.*

Audience members. *Kalispera.*

The President. Thank you, Your Eminence, for the kind introduction. It is always an honor to welcome you here in the White House. We've been friends for quite some time now, and His Eminence always displays such grace and good humor and is so generous. We are so very grateful for your leadership.

It is a wonderful pleasure to see so many friends and leaders of the Hellenic American community here as we celebrate the 190th anniversary of Greek independence. I want to acknowledge several people. First of all, we've got some Members of Congress here. Michael Grimm from New York, where's Michael? There he is. Carolyn Maloney, also from New York; John Sarbanes, from Maryland; and then we have another guy—I don't know if he's any relation—Paul Sarbanes, also of Maryland.

We've got Ambassador Demetrios Marantis, Deputy USTR. He's got a few fans here. We've got Nicholas Karacostas, the President of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.

I want to especially welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Dollis for traveling all the way here from Athens to join us today. I spoke with

your Prime Minister, our good friend Mr. Papandreou, today, and I wanted him to extend our congratulations to the entire Greek nation. And we very much appreciate you being here to represent your Government.

We are also joined here by Greek Ambassador Kaskarelis. Where is he? There he is. Good to see you, Mr. Ambassador. We have the Cypriot Ambassador Anas—aww—[laughter]—Anastasiades—there you go—[laughter]—and his wife Maria.

Tonight we reaffirm the bond our two nations have shared for as long as we've existed. Our Founding Fathers were students of Greek philosophy and Greek history, drawing on Greek principles to guide our own Nation in its earliest days.

When it was time for Greek revolutionaries to fight for freedom, they looked to the United States for strength and support. And to this day, the United States and Greece shares a bond rooted in common values and common ideals.

As allies, we stand together, not only for our own security, but for the freedom of peoples around the world. And right now Greek and American soldiers are serving together in Afghanistan. And as we celebrate the independence of the Greek people, the United States and Greece are standing with our NATO allies

to support the Libyan people as they stand up for their own freedom.

So I just want to express the extraordinary thanks that I give to the people of Greece for their friendship and for their contributions to the life of our Nation and so many others. I also obviously want to say to all my great friends in the Greek American community how much I appreciate your support and your friendship, and I'm glad that we have one more occasion to celebrate together here in the White House. So it's wonderful to see you again, and I hope you guys have a great time today.

The President's Weekly Address *March 26, 2011*

Last week, when I ordered our Armed Forces to protect the Libyan people from the brutality of Muammar Qadhafi, I pledged to keep the American people fully informed. Since then, I've spoken about the limited scope and specific purpose of this mission. Today I can report that thanks to our brave men and women in uniform, we've made important progress.

As Commander in Chief, I face no greater decision than sending our military men and women into harm's way. And the United States should not, and cannot, intervene every time there's a crisis somewhere in the world.

But I firmly believe that when innocent people are being brutalized, when someone like Qadhafi threatens a bloodbath that could destabilize an entire region, and when the international community is prepared to come together to save many thousands of lives, then it's in our national interest to act. And it's our responsibility. This is one of those times.

Our military mission in Libya is clear and focused. Along with our allies and partners, we're enforcing the mandate of the United Nations Security Council. We're protecting the Libyan people from Qadhafi's forces. And we've put in place a no-fly zone and other measures to prevent further atrocities.

We're succeeding in our mission. We've taken out Libya's air defenses. Qadhafi's forces are no longer advancing across Libya. In places like Benghazi, a city of some 700,000 that Qadhafi

All right? Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, who introduced the President; former Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes; Prime Minister Georgios Andreas Papandreou of Greece; Greece's Ambassador to the U.S. Vassilis Kaskarelis; and Cyprus's Ambassador to the U.S. Pavlos Anastasiades and his wife Maria Antonopoulou-Anastasiades.

hafi threatened to show no mercy, his forces have been pushed back. So make no mistake, because we acted quickly, a humanitarian catastrophe has been avoided and the lives of countless civilians—innocent men, women, and children—have been saved.

As I pledged at the outset, the role of American forces has been limited. We are not putting any ground forces into Libya. Our military has provided unique capabilities at the beginning, but this is now a broad, international effort. Our allies and partners are enforcing the no-fly zone over Libya and the arms embargo at sea. Key Arab partners like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have committed aircraft. And as agreed this week, responsibility for this operation is being transferred from the United States to our NATO allies and partners.

This is how the international community should work: more nations, not just the United States, bearing the responsibility and cost of upholding peace and security.

This military effort is part of our larger strategy to support the Libyan people and hold the Qadhafi regime accountable. Together with the international community, we're delivering urgent humanitarian assistance. We're offering support to the Libyan opposition. We've frozen tens of billions of dollars of Qadhafi's assets that can help meet the needs and aspirations of the Libyan people. And every day, the pressure on Qadhafi and his regime is increasing.