

The United States opposes the use of violence against peaceful protesters in Syria, and we support the universal rights of the Syrian people. We have imposed sanctions on President Asad and his Government. The European Union has imposed sanctions as well. We helped lead an effort at the U.N. Security Council to condemn Syria's actions. We have coordinated closely with allies and partners from the region and around the world. The Asad Government has now been condemned by countries in all parts of the globe and can look only to Iran for support for its brutal and unjust crackdown.

The future of Syria must be determined by its people, but President Bashar al-Asad is standing in their way. His calls for dialogue and reform have rung hollow while he is imprisoning, torturing, and slaughtering his own people. We have consistently said that President Asad must lead a democratic transition or get out of the way. He has not led. For the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Asad to step aside.

The United States cannot and will not impose this transition upon Syria. It is up to the Syrian people to choose their own leaders, and we have heard their strong desire that there not be foreign intervention in their movement. What the United States will support is an effort to bring about a Syria that is democratic, just, and inclusive for all Syrians. We will support this outcome by pressuring President Asad to get out of the way of this transition and standing up for the universal rights of the Syrian people along with others in the international community.

The President's Weekly Address

August 20, 2011

Hello from the Country Corner Farm in Alpa, Illinois. For the past few days, I've been traveling to small towns and farm towns here in the heartland of this country. I sat down with small-business owners in Gutenberg, Iowa, and ranchers and farmers in Peosta. I had lunch with veterans in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, and talked to plant workers at a seed distributor in Atkinson, Illinois. And to the girls volleyball team in Maquoketa High School, let me just say one thing: Go Cardinals!

As a part of that effort, my administration is announcing unprecedented sanctions to deepen the financial isolation of the Asad regime and further disrupt its ability to finance a campaign of violence against the Syrian people. I have signed a new Executive order requiring the immediate freeze of all assets of the Government of Syria subject to U.S. jurisdiction and prohibiting U.S. persons from engaging in any transaction involving the Government of Syria. This E.O. also bans U.S. imports of Syrian-origin petroleum or petroleum products, prohibits U.S. persons from having any dealings in or related to Syria's petroleum or petroleum products, and prohibits U.S. persons from operating or investing in Syria. We expect today's actions to be amplified by others.

We recognize that it will take time for the Syrian people to achieve the justice they deserve. There will be more struggle and sacrifice. It is clear that President Asad believes that he can silence the voices of his people by resorting to the repressive tactics of the past. But he is wrong. As we have learned these last several months, sometimes, the way things have been is not the way that they will be. It is time for the Syrian people to determine their own destiny, and we will continue to stand firmly on their side.

NOTE: The statement referred to Executive Order 13582, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Now, I'm out here for one reason: I think Washington, DC, can learn something from the folks in Atkinson and Peosta and Cannon Falls. I think our country would be a whole lot better off if our elected leaders showed the same kind of discipline and integrity and responsibility that most Americans demonstrate in their lives every single day.

Because the fact is, we're going through a tough time right now. We're coming through a terrible recession. A lot of folks are still looking

for work. A lot of people are getting by with smaller paychecks or less money in the cash register. So we need folks in Washington—the people whose job it is to deal with the country's problems, the people who you elected to serve—we need them to put aside their differences to get things done.

There are things we can do right now that will mean more customers for businesses and more jobs across the country. We can cut payroll taxes again so families have an extra \$1,000 to spend. We can pass a road construction bill so construction crews who are now sitting idle can head back to the worksite, rebuilding roads, bridges, and airports. We've got brave, skilled Americans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Let's connect them with businesses that could use their skills. And let's pass trade deals to level the playing field for our businesses. We have Americans driving Hyundais and Kias. Well, I want to see folks in Korea driving Fords, Chevys, and Chryslers. I want more products sold around the globe stamped with three words: Made in America.

These are commonsense ideas, ideas that have been supported by both Democrats and Republicans. The only thing holding them back is politics. The only thing preventing us from passing these bills is the refusal by some in Congress to put country ahead of party. That's the problem we have right now. That's what's holding this country back. That's what we have to change.

Because, for all the knocks we've taken, despite all the challenges we face, this is still the greatest country on Earth. We still have the

best workers and farmers, entrepreneurs and businesses, students and scientists. And you can see that here in Alpha. You can see it along the country roads that connect these small towns and farmlands.

These past few days, I've been seeing little kids with American flags and grandparents in lawn chairs. I've shaken hands with folks outside machine shops and churches, corner stores and farms. It reminds me of why I got into public service in the first place. Getting out of Washington and spending time with the people of this country, seeing how hard you're working, how creative you are, how resourceful you are, how determined you are, that only makes me more determined to serve you as best I can as President. And it only makes me more confident in our future.

That's why it's so important that folks in Washington put country before party. That's why it's so important that our elected leaders get past their differences to help grow the economy and put this Nation back to work. Because here in Alpha, it couldn't be more clear: If we can come together, there is no stopping the United States of America. There's no doubt that our future is bright.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:35 p.m. on August 17 at the Country Corner Farm Market in Alpha, IL, for broadcast on August 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 20.

Statement on the Situation in Libya *August 21, 2011*

Tonight the momentum against the Qadhafi regime has reached a tipping point. Tripoli is slipping from the grasp of a tyrant. The Qadhafi regime is showing signs of collapsing. The people of Libya are showing that the universal pursuit of dignity and freedom is far stronger than the iron fist of a dictator.

The surest way for the bloodshed to end is simple: Muammar Qadhafi and his regime

need to recognize that their rule has come to an end. Qadhafi needs to acknowledge the reality that he no longer controls Libya. He needs to relinquish power once and for all. Meanwhile, the United States has recognized the Transitional National Council as the legitimate governing authority in Libya. At this pivotal and historic time, the TNC should continue to demonstrate the leadership that is necessary to steer