

and the Arab world, that there's nothing unique in aspiring to freedom and human rights and democracy. This is something that all people want to enjoy, and I'm very pleased that the Libyan people are going to have the opportunity to do so. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on Azerbaijan's Independence Day *October 20, 2011*

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend my best wishes to all those who are celebrating Azerbaijan's Independence Day in Azerbaijan, in the United States, and around the world. This 20th anniversary of independence and Azerbaijan's achievements

during this time demonstrate the extraordinary promise and determination of the Azeri people. The United States is committed to developing greater opportunities to work with the Government and people of Azerbaijan.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of John E. Bryson as Secretary of Commerce *October 20, 2011*

As Secretary of Commerce, John Bryson will be a key member of my economic team, working with the business community to promote job creation, foster growth, and help open up new markets around the world for American-made goods. At such a critical time for our economy, I nominated John because I believe

his decades of experience both in the public and private sector have given him a clear understanding of what it takes to put America on a stronger economic footing and create jobs. I'm confident he will help us do that, and I look forward to working closely with him in the months and years ahead.

Statement on Senate Action on Job Growth Legislation *October 20, 2011*

For the second time in 2 weeks, every single Republican in the United States Senate has chosen to obstruct a bill that would create jobs and get our economy going again. That's unacceptable. We must do what's right for the country and pass the commonsense proposals in the "American Jobs Act." Every Senate Republican voted to block a bill that would help middle class families and keep hundreds of thousands of firefighters on the job, police officers on the streets, and teachers in the classroom when our kids need them most.

Those Americans deserve an explanation as to why they don't deserve those jobs, and every American deserves an explanation as to why

Republicans refuse to step up to the plate and do what's necessary to create jobs and grow the economy right now.

We must rebuild the economy the American way and restore security for the middle class based on the values of balance and fairness. Independent economists have said the "American Jobs Act" could create up to 2 million jobs next year. So the choice is clear. Our fight isn't over. We will keep working with Congress to bring up the "American Jobs Act" piece by piece and give Republicans another chance to put country before party and help us put the American people back to work.

Remarks on the Withdrawal of United States Military Personnel From Iraq *October 21, 2011*

Good afternoon, everybody. As a candidate for President, I pledged to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end, for the sake of our national security and to strengthen American leadership around the world. After taking office, I announced a new strategy that would end our combat mission in Iraq and remove all of our troops by the end of 2011.

As Commander in Chief, ensuring the success of this strategy has been one of my highest national security priorities. Last year, I announced the end to our combat mission in Iraq. And to date, we've removed more than 100,000 troops. Iraqis have taken full responsibility for their country's security.

A few hours ago, I spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. I reaffirmed that the United States keeps its commitments. He spoke of the determination of the Iraqi people to forge their own future. We are in full agreement about how to move forward.

So today I can report that, as promised, the rest of our troops in Iraq will come home by the end of the year. After nearly 9 years, America's war in Iraq will be over.

Over the next 2 months, our troops in Iraq—tens of thousands of them—will pack up their gear and board convoys for the journey home. The last American soldier [soldiers] will cross the border out of Iraq with their heads held high, proud of their success, and knowing that the American people stand united in our support for our troops. That is how America's military efforts in Iraq will end.

But even as we mark this important milestone, we're also moving into a new phase in the relationship between the United States and Iraq. As of January 1 and in keeping with our strategic framework agreement with Iraq, it will be a normal relationship between sovereign nations, an equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

In today's conversation, Prime Minister Maliki and I agreed that a meeting of the Higher

Coordinating Committee of the strategic framework agreement will convene in the coming weeks. And I invited the Prime Minister to come to the White House in December, as we plan for all the important work that we have to do together. This will be a strong and enduring partnership. With our diplomats and civilian advisers in the lead, we'll help Iraqis strengthen institutions that are just, representative, and accountable. We'll build new ties of trade and of commerce, culture and education that unleash the potential of the Iraqi people. We'll partner with an Iraq that contributes to regional security and peace, just as we insist that other nations respect Iraq's sovereignty.

As I told Prime Minister Maliki, we will continue discussions on how we might help Iraq train and equip its forces, again, just as we offer training and assistance to countries around the world. After all, there will be some difficult days ahead for Iraq, and the United States will continue to have an interest in an Iraq that is stable, secure, and self-reliant. Just as Iraqis have persevered through war, I'm confident that they can build a future worthy of their history as a cradle of civilization.

Here at home, the coming months will be another season of homecomings. Across America, our service men and women will be reunited with their families. Today I can say that our troops in Iraq will definitely be home for the holidays.

This December will be a time to reflect on all that we've been through in this war. I'll join the American people in paying tribute to the more than 1 million Americans who have served in Iraq. We'll honor our many wounded warriors and the nearly 4,500 American patriots—and their Iraqi and coalition partners—who gave their lives to this effort.

And finally, I would note that the end of war in Iraq reflects a larger transition. The tide of war is receding. The drawdown in Iraq allowed us to refocus our fight against Al Qaida and achieve major victories against its leadership,

^o White House correction.