

New Zealanders, the Kiwis are pretty good at rugby so—[laughter]—I don't think we're seeded number one in the tournament, but I have confidence that we will acquit ourselves well.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Murray S. McCully of New Zealand.

Statement on Certification of Repeal of the United States Military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Policy

July 22, 2011

Today we have taken the final major step toward ending the discriminatory "don't ask, don't tell" law that undermines our military readiness and violates American principles of fairness and equality. In accordance with the legislation that I signed into law last December, I have certified and notified Congress that the requirements for repeal have been met. "Don't ask, don't tell" will end once and for all in 60 days—on September 20, 2011.

As Commander in Chief, I have always been confident that our dedicated men and women in uniform would transition to a new policy in an orderly manner that preserves unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, and military effectiveness. Today's action follows extensive training of our military personnel and certification by Secretary Panetta and Admiral Mullen that our military is ready for repeal. As of September 20th, servicemembers will no longer be

forced to hide who they are in order to serve our country. Our military will no longer be deprived of the talents and skills of patriotic Americans just because they happen to be gay or lesbian.

I want to commend our civilian and military leadership for moving forward in the careful and deliberate manner that this change requires, especially with our Nation at war. I want to thank all our men and women in uniform, including those who are gay or lesbian, for their professionalism and patriotism during this transition. Every American can be proud that our extraordinary troops and their families, like earlier generations that have adapted to other changes, will only grow stronger and remain the best fighting force in the world and a reflection of the values of justice and equality that define us as Americans.

Remarks on the Federal Budget and an Exchange With Reporters

July 22, 2011

The President. Good evening, everybody. I wanted to give you an update on the current situation around the debt ceiling. I just got a call about a half hour ago from Speaker Boehner, who indicated that he was going to be walking away from the negotiations that we've been engaged in here at the White House for a big deficit reduction and debt reduction package. And I thought it would be useful for me to just give you some insight into where we were and why I think that we should have moved forward with a big deal.

Essentially what we had offered Speaker Boehner was over a trillion dollars in cuts to

discretionary spending, both domestic and defense. We then offered an additional \$650 billion in cuts to entitlement programs: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security. We believed that it was possible to shape those in a way that preserved the integrity of the system, made them available for the next generation, and did not affect current beneficiaries in an adverse way.

In addition, what we sought was revenues that were actually less than what the Gang of Six signed off on. So you had a bipartisan group of Senators, including Republicans who are in leadership in the Senate, calling for what effectively was about \$2 trillion above the Republi-