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And you think about all that this city and all of you have been through over the last few years. Think about folks like Jeff Brower. Now, Jeff was in the trucking industry for over a decade. Two years ago, he got laid off, lost his job as a diesel mechanic. That's a tough thing to go through, even though Jeff's a pretty tough guy. But he bounced back. He decided it was time for him to change careers. He decided it was time to get some new skills. He went to AB-Tech, took a class in automated machining. A few months ago, Jeff got his diploma. He graduated on a Wednesday, interviewed at this plant on Thursday. By Friday, he was working as a machine operator.

Where's Jeff? There he is, right here. Now, obviously, Jeff is pretty good at interviews—[*laughter*]—because he just got hired like that. I hope he can give me some advice. [*Laughter*]

But here's the thing. The reason Jeff did all that—obviously, a lot of it was to support himself and his family—but it wasn't just to punch a clock at a new plant or pick up a paycheck from a new company. It was to make sure he could have a better future for his family and for his community and his country. Jeff said: "Getting my foot in the door has opened my eyes to bigger horizons. And I want to keep on going." I want to keep on going.

So that's our story. That's the American story. We don't give up. We get up. We innovate. We adapt. We learn new skills. We keep going. And I just want everybody here to know at this plant—but everybody in Asheville, everybody in North Carolina, and everybody all across the country—I want you to know as long as you're out here fighting every day to better your lives and to better the lives of your children, then I'll be back in Washington fighting for you. I will be back there fighting for you, because there's nothing we can't do and no possibilities we can't reach when we're working together. We just have to work together.

And we've got to stop with some of the politics that we see in Washington sometimes that's focused on who's up and who's down. Let's just focus on the same kind of common sense and cooperation that we're seeing at this plant and we see all across the country.

So thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Stratton Taylor, employee, Frank Hasenfratz, chairman of the board of directors, Jim Jarrell, president and chief operating officer, and Jeff Brower, machinist, Linamar Corp.; and Mayor Terry M. Bellamy of Asheville, NC.

Statement on the Observance of Ash Wednesday
February 13, 2013

Michelle and I join with Christians here and around the world in marking Ash Wednesday. This is a day of both reflection and joy, a time to ponder the meaning of repentance and restoration. As we enter Lent, we join millions in renewing our faith and remembering our commitment to love and serve one another.

Joint Statement by President Obama, President Herman Van Rompuy of the European Council, and President José Manuel Durão Barroso of the European Commission
February 13, 2013

We, the Leaders of the United States and the European Union, are pleased to announce that, based on recommendations from the U.S.-EU High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth co-chaired by United States Trade Representative Kirk and European Trade Commissioner De Gucht, the United States and the European Union will each initiate the

internal procedures necessary to launch negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

The transatlantic economic relationship is already the world's largest, accounting for half of global economic output and nearly one trillion dollars in goods and services trade, and supporting millions of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

We are committed to making this relationship an even stronger driver of our prosperity. In that regard, we welcome the High Level Working Group's recommendations on how we can expand further our transatlantic trade and investment partnership, promoting greater growth and supporting more jobs.

A high-standard Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership would advance trade and investment liberalization and address regulatory and other non-tariff barriers.

Through this negotiation, the United States and the European Union will have the opportunity not only to expand trade and investment across the Atlantic, but also to contribute to the development of global rules that can strengthen the multilateral trading system.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Libya

February 13, 2013

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond February 25, 2013.

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, his government, and close associates took extreme measures against the people of Libya, including by using weapons of war, mercenaries, and wanton violence against unarmed civilians. In addition, there was a serious risk that Libyan state assets would be misappropriated by Qadhafi, members of his government, members of his family, or his close associates if those assets were not protected. The foregoing circumstances, the prolonged attacks, and the increased numbers of Libyans seeking refuge in other countries caused a deterioration in the security of Libya, posed a serious risk to its stability, and led me to declare a national emergency to deal with this threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

We are in the process of winding down the sanctions in response to developments in Libya, including the fall of Qadhafi and his government and the establishment of a democratically elected government. We are working closely with the new Libyan government and with the international community to effectively and appropriately ease restrictions on sanctioned entities, including by taking actions consistent with the U.N. Security Council's decision to lift sanctions against the Central Bank of Libya and two other entities on December 16, 2011. The situation in Libya, however, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States and we need to protect against this threat and the diversion of assets or other abuse by certain members of Qadhafi's family and other former regime officials. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Libya.

BARACK OBAMA