

for building strong and cooperative ties with its neighbors and regional partners.

Bilateral Security Agreement

As we further develop the U.S.-Afghanistan partnership, the United States and Afghanistan look forward to expanded cooperation under the auspices of the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission, through 2014 and beyond. President Obama and President Karzai committed to conclude the Bilateral Security Agreement as soon as possible, reaffirming that such an agreement is in both countries' interest. They discussed the possibility of a post-2014 U.S. presence that is sustainable, that supports a capable and effective Afghan National Security Force, and that continues to pressure the remnants of al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. The scope and nature of any possible post-2014 U.S. presence, legal protections for U.S. forces, and security cooperation between the two countries is to be specified in the Bilateral Security

Agreement. The U.S. reaffirmed that it does not seek permanent bases in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

President Obama reaffirmed the United States' respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty and reiterated that as Afghanistan takes full responsibility for its security and development, the United States continues to be committed to supporting the Afghan people. Both Presidents paid tribute to the sacrifices made by Afghanistan, the United States, and our international partners in efforts to achieve a stable, prosperous, peaceful, sovereign and democratic future for Afghanistan, as well as security for the international community. The United States and Afghanistan intend to continue working together to achieve the full promise of our enduring partnership.

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

Statement on Senator John D. "Jay" Rockefeller IV's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 11, 2013

Jay Rockefeller first arrived in West Virginia as a young volunteer, eager to improve the lives of working families. And for more than four decades, he has continued to fight tirelessly on their behalf. From his time in the State legislature to the Governor's office, to the Senate floor, Jay has built an impressive legacy, one that can be found in the children who have better schools, the miners who have safer working conditions, the seniors who have

retired with greater dignity, and the new industries that he helped bring to West Virginia. A long-time champion of health care reform, Jay was also instrumental in the fight to make sure that nobody in America has to go broke because they get sick. Michelle and I join the people of West Virginia in thanking Senator Rockefeller for a lifetime of service, and I look forward to continuing to work with him over the next 2 years.

The President's Weekly Address

January 12, 2013

Hi, everybody. This week, I welcomed President Hamid Karzai to the White House to discuss the way ahead in Afghanistan. And today I want to update you on how we will end this war, bring our troops home, and continue the work of rebuilding America.

Over the past 4 years, thanks to our brave men and women in uniform, we've dealt devastating blows to Al Qaida. We've pushed the Taliban out of their strongholds. And our core objective—the reason we went to war in the first place—is now within reach: ensuring that