

true north, that eventually we'll get there. That's what this country has always done. That's what I expect will happen this time as well.

So with that, I'm going to stop, and I'm just going to open it up for questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. at the residence of Harvey Weinstein and Geor-

gina Chapman. In his remarks, he referred to President Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua; radio show host Rush Limbaugh; and Dashiell Weinstein, son of Mr. Weinstein and Ms. Chapman. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in New York City May 13, 2013

Well, first of all, I want to make sure everybody has got their food—[laughter]—because I don't want to get in the way of dinner here, because it looks delicious.

I want to thank Alexandra and Sam for their wonderful hospitality. It is not easy opening up your house for an event with the President, between all the tables and then the Secret Service and this and that. But you guys have been great friends, and this means so much to us, so we are very, very grateful. [Applause] Yes, absolutely.

I see a lot of friends and supporters in the room. So many of you were active during the course of the campaign. I could not be more grateful for it and more humbled. One person I do want to acknowledge—because not only was he active in the campaign, but he has now been volunteered to head up the DNC Finance Committee—Henry Muñoz is here from the great State of Texas. So I want to say thank you to Henry.

This is a pretty rambunctious group, so I want to use most of my time for questions and answers. But let me just make a few comments at the top. Obviously, this last month, America faced some enormous challenges. We had the Boston bombing, the explosion in West, Texas. And I was mentioning at an event before I came here, I was driving with Deval Patrick to the memorial service in Boston, and we remarked on how when tragedy strikes, when a crisis occurs, there's something about the American spirit: The resilience, strength, but most of all, that sense of community and neighborliness just shines through.

And even in our darkest hours, you can't help but come away incredibly optimistic about the country. Now, the question Deval and I asked ourselves is, how do we sustain that beyond moments of crisis and tragedy, and how do we translate that into our politics and our institutions? Because obviously, that spirit isn't always in evidence in Washington. [Laughter] But having said that, one of the virtues of a second term is it gives you some perspective. And I don't have another race to run. And what I've learned from my first term in office—and probably, what I've learned during the course of my life—is things that are worth doing don't happen right away. And it requires persistence and just the steady, constant application of hard work and tenacity and the ability to maintain a vision about where you want to go.

So here, domestically, our work is not yet done. And I am absolutely confident that if we stay with it, we are going to be able to get immigration reform done this year. We're going to be able to continue some of the incredible education work that's being done all around the country, and Randi has been an incredible partner in that process. We're going to be able to continue to work to make sure that we're rebuilding our infrastructure in our country, putting people back to work, helping the housing market continue to recover, putting people all across the country in a position where if they're willing to work hard, they can succeed and achieve their own American dreams.

So we've got a big agenda here at home. But we also have a big agenda internationally. Obviously, all of us are deeply concerned about

what's happening in Syria. And my administration has worked with international partners to mobilize humanitarian aid, nonlethal assistance to the opposition, isolating Asad, and continuing to press for political transition that ends the slaughter and brings about an end to the Asad regime.

We also have a lot of unfinished business with respect to Afghanistan. Our troops are coming home, and we're transitioning out. But it's still a very dangerous place. And we have to make sure that the gains that have been made are sustained. And we've got to make sure that we're being vigilant when it comes to dealing with Al Qaida and other terrorist elements.

And then, something that so many people in this room are knowledgeable about, the peace process and reinvigorating a sense of hope and possibility for both Israelis and Palestinians. One of the highlights obviously of this early second term was the trip that I was able to take to Israel and to the Palestinian Authority and to the West Bank. And what made the trip so incredible was not only the capacity to see the incredible progress that Israel has made on so many fronts—we looked at science exhibitions and to see how the economy is transforming itself into a high-tech, entrepreneurial center and to have a chance to talk to young people who are doing so many incredible things.

But what was also encouraging was the sense that for all the difficulties, for all the setbacks, for all the false starts, deep down, there's still this incredible desire for peace. It exists in Israel; it exists among the Palestinians. And the question is, can we create a framework in which to actually finally deliver on that promise, particularly because the window of opportunity is growing smaller by the day? And in some ways, it's more difficult because of the incredible tumult that's taking place throughout the Middle East.

When change is happening so fast—and in some cases, so chaotically and sometimes violently—it makes people tend not to take risks. On the other hand, precisely because those

changes are taking place all around the region, Israel's security and the prospect of Palestinian statehood all requires that those risks are taken and they're taken now.

And in order for us to achieve that, it's going to be important that John Kerry and my administration continue to work this thing very hard. But part of what's going to be required is also that those who are committed to peace here in this country continue to make their voices heard and continue to speak out. So many of you already have and are already making a difference, but I urge you to continue. And it's going to have to happen not just in interactions with the State Department or my administration, you're going to have to be vocal on Capitol Hill as well.

And if we sustain that, then, in fits and starts—it will be difficult, it will be tough, there will be times where it feels like we're going backwards instead of forwards—I believe that in the end, peace can be achieved. I am a big believer in a quote that I took from Dr. King, but I think describes my general perspective about both America and our future, but also our role in the world, and that is that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” It requires persistence, it requires tenacity, but in the end, I think that good overcomes evil and light overcomes darkness. And that's what we have to strive for every single day, and that's how I intend to spend the 3½ years that I have remaining as President, and I couldn't have done that without the help of all of you.

So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:52 p.m. at the residence of Alexandra Stanton and Samuel Natapoff. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; Randi Weingarten, president, American Federation of Teachers; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.