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problem and we've highlighted it and people who are engaging in despicable behavior, they get fully punished for it.

So again, I want to emphasize: Everybody in this room has heard from me directly. They've heard from Secretary Hagel, and they've heard from Marty Dempsey. They all understand this is a priority and we will not stop until we've seen this scourge, from what is the greatest military in the world, eliminated. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:53 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Ernest J. Moniz as Secretary of Energy
May 16, 2013

I am pleased that today, by a unanimous vote, the Senate confirmed Ernest Moniz as our next Energy Secretary. Dr. Moniz is a world-class scientist with expertise in a range of energy sources and a leader with a proven record of bringing prominent thinkers and innovators together to advance new energy solutions. He also shares my conviction that the United States must lead the world in developing more sustainable sources of energy that create new jobs and new industries and in responding to the threat of global climate change. I am thrilled that Ernie is joining my team, and I look forward to his counsel on these issues as my administration continues to increase our Nation's energy security, strengthen our nuclear security, develop the next generation of clean energy technologies, and compete for the jobs of the 21st century.

Remarks at Ellicott Dredges, LLC, in Baltimore, Maryland
May 17, 2013

The President. Hello, Baltimore! Well, it is wonderful to see all of you. Give Duncan a big round of applause for the great introduction. I want to thank all of you for the warm welcome, the great hospitality. And I tell you what, I'm going to return the favor by hosting your Super Bowl Champion Baltimore Ravens at the White House this summer. So we'll have Ray Lewis in the China Room. What could go wrong? [*Laughter*]

I want to thank your CEO, Peter Bowe, and your plant manager, Robert Croom, and your entire team for showing me around this great facility. I was told that one of your customers once named a dredge after President Clinton, so I've got my fingers crossed. [*Laughter*] Never had a dredge named after me, so I'm looking after—looking forward to that.

I've come here today to talk about our single most important priority as a country right now. And that is reigniting the true engine of our economic growth, and that is a rising, thriving middle class. And as I said in my State of the Union Address this year, that's our north star. That's what we have to focus on. That's what has to guide all our efforts.

And we've got some great people who are championing middle class families every single day. First of all, your outstanding Governor—come on—Martin O'Malley. Your outstanding mayor, Madam Mayor. You've got some outstanding Members of Congress, led by your senior Senator, Barbara Mikulski. And your own leader in the House of Representatives, he is doing a great job every single day, and he loves this State: Steny Hoyer.

The—so we've got just some extraordinary folks here. Every—let me make sure I've—Elijah Cummings is here. But more importantly, Elijah's mom is here. And we are so proud of Elijah, but his mom apparently prays for me every day, so I'm very grateful for her as well.

And the—all of these, all of your Members of Congress, every single day, are working, fighting on behalf—on your behalf in terms of making sure that we're growing an economy

that creates outstanding middle class jobs. That's the challenge that we should be rallying around every single day. And I know it can seem frustrating sometimes when it seems like Washington's priorities aren't the same as your priorities. I know it often seems like folks down there are more concerned with their jobs than with yours. Others may get distracted by chasing every fleeting issue that passes by. But the middle class will always be my number-one focus, period. Your jobs, your families, your communities, that's why I ran for President. That's what drives me every day as I step into the Oval Office. That's what I'm going to keep fighting for over the next 4 years.

And that's why I'm so proud to have these partners. The—John Sarbanes I saved for last, because Congressman Sarbanes, he himself is doing a great job, but when I first came in, his father was one of the people who I so admired in the Senate. He had served for a long time. And I remember just a conversation that we had. He probably doesn't remember it, but he—I asked him—I came and paid him a visit, and I asked him, what's your advice? He says: "Just keep in mind the people who sent you. Because here in Washington, sometimes people get distracted. But you're here to work on behalf of your constituencies. And if you stick to that, you're going to be just fine."

And that's what's happening here in Maryland. Under Governor O'Malley's leadership, Maryland has won back almost 100 percent of the jobs that were claimed by the recession. So you might not know it if you were just watching the news and you're exposed to all these partisan battles and brinksmanship in Washington, but the truth is, there are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about where this country is headed, especially after all that we've been through over the past several years. And that's got to encourage us to roll up our sleeves and work together and take on the challenges that are still holding back the economy and holding down working families.

Now, the good news is, in a little over 3 years, businesses like this one have created more than 6.5 million new jobs. And while our unemployment rate is still too high, it's the lowest it's been since 2008. That's good news. But that's not enough because we've also got to create even more good, middle class jobs, and we've go to do it even faster.

Corporate profits have skyrocketed at an all-time high. Now we've got to make sure that middle class wages and incomes are going up too, because families all across America haven't seen their take-home pay rise for nearly a decade. That's the next phase. It's good that companies are profitable. I want you to be profitable. I want you to be taking a little more home in your paycheck.

Our housing market is healing. But that's not enough. Now we've got to help more families stay in their homes or refinance to take advantage of these historically low interest rates.

Our deficits are shrinking at the fastest rate in decades. That's the truth. That's worth applause, sure, because you wouldn't always know that listening to folks in Washington. But the fact is, our deficits are going down faster than they have gone down in decades. But we still have to create a budget that is smart and doesn't hurt middle class families or harm our critical investments into our future.

Barbara Mikulski is on the Appropriations Committee; she's fighting hard to make sure that this sequester that is slowing down growth—and we're starting to see growth slowing down because of furloughs and cuts in defense spending and a whole bunch of stuff that wasn't well thought through. We've got to make sure that we've got a budget that doesn't push our economy back down. We need a budget that pushes our economy back up.

The American auto industry is thriving. American energy is booming. American ingenuity in our tech sector has the potential to change the way we do almost everything.

And thanks to the grit and determination of the American people, we've been able to clear away the rubble of the crisis. We're now poised for progress, but our work is not done, and our focus cannot drift. We've got to stay focused on our economy and putting people back to work, and raising wages and bringing manufacturing back to the United States of America. That has

to be what we're thinking about every single day.

Middle class has been taking a beating for more than a decade. You deserve folks in Washington who are willing to fight back on your behalf every single day. Because every single day, you and Americans like you all across the country are working hard and living up to your responsibilities. So you've got to have the same seriousness of purpose in your leaders.

Now, I see three areas where we need to focus if we're really going to keep the recovery going, but take it to new heights. Number one, we've got to make America a magnet for good jobs. Number two, we've got to make sure that workers are able to get the education and skills they need to do those jobs. Number three, we've got to make sure that, if and when you're working hard, that that leads to a decent living.

And that's why I wanted to come to Baltimore, because a lot of people here in Baltimore, they work hard. Baltimore has gone through tough times in the past, but Baltimore has come bouncing back.

I started a few hours ago at a pre-K program at Moravia Park Elementary School. There, kids are getting a head start learning skills they need to succeed in college and the workplace. And by the way, this is a center that was named after Steny's—Steny Hoyer's late wife Judy because she and Steny share my belief in the importance of giving every kid every chance as early as possible.

I got to help with one of the lessons; we were having to draw zoo animals. [*Laughter*] And I've got to say, my tiger was not very good. [*Laughter*] The kids were unimpressed. They kind of looked at it, they said, that doesn't look like a tiger. [*Laughter*] But they were amazing.

And later today I'm going to visit with a program that helps people who have gone through some tough circumstances, especially low-income dads, and this program is now helping them get the training and the guidance they need to find work and support a family. The—which is a priority because—and probably, some of these folks who I'm meeting, they didn't get that early childhood education that put them on the right track. And what we want to do is, first of all, make sure our kids are getting the training they need, but if they missed out early on, we still want to give them opportunity on the backend.

But obviously, the training of kids, giving them good education, training older workers, none of that is going to make a difference if we don't have great companies that are hiring. And that's why I wanted to come to Ellicott.

Ellicott Dredges, you guys are an example of what we can do to make America a magnet for good jobs. After all, you all know a thing or two about growing the economy; you've been doing it for more than a century. This company was founded in 1885. You've been right here on Bush Street since 1900. This company built dredging equipment that helped dig the Panama Canal. [*Applause*] That's impressive.

What that means is this company, right here in Baltimore, literally helped create our global economy, because that was one of the first connectors, right, that started to allow us to ship goods and cut the distances that integrated the world economy.

And yet, after all this time, this company still has a set of core values that's lasted for generations. Just like the folks who came before you, you've got that drive to make the best machines that money can buy, to sell products all over the world, to grow not just a business, but a community, and by doing that, you're growing our country.

And these values have seen you through an era of enormous change. Your leaders saw the potential in developing markets like China and India and Brazil and Bangladesh. So you ramped up your focus on airports—on exports—maybe on airports too—[*laughter*]—but on exports. And the Federal Government has worked with you as a partner to sell dredging equipment right out of this shop all over the world. You maintained your quality. You built a sales force that travels everywhere, outhustling the competition in search of new business.

All that hard work has paid off. Today, this company, you have sold equipment to more than 100 different countries. You've made new

investments here at home. You employ more than 200 people in Baltimore and Wisconsin and Kansas. And over the past few decades, during some of the tough times for our workers, you were able to keep building equipment stamped with those three proud words: Made in America. And you're selling it around the world.

As Steny Hoyer and some of these House Members like to say, that means you're making it in America.

Representative Steny H. Hoyer. All right.

The President. See, Steny gets excited. [*Laughter*] You're actually making stuff here in America, but it also means that we're all making it here in America when you do what you're doing. And this is a great example.

And the good news is, more and more companies are following your example. After shedding jobs for 10 years, our manufacturers have added more than 500,000 jobs over the past 3 years. Ford is bringing jobs back from Mexico. Caterpillar is bringing jobs back from Japan. After placing plants in other countries like China, Intel, which is making the chips in your smartphone and your iPad and your—all of these gizmos everybody is holding up right now—[*laughter*]—Intel is opening its most advanced plant right here at home, right here in America.

Washington should be helping these kinds of success stories take root all across the country. That's why we've boosted—my administration has boosted our efforts to help businesses export more of their goods and services. That's why we signed trade agreements that will protect American workers, but open up new markets and support tens of thousands of good-paying jobs.

That's why we reauthorized the Export-Import Bank. And we are proud to have the bank's chairman right here, Fred Hochberg. He's here this afternoon. He's helping this company, as we speak, sell more goods overseas. And so today, exports are at an alltime high. We are selling more stuff around the world. We've added more than a million export-supported jobs since I took office.

So all these steps are making a difference, but there's more we can do. We need to pursue new trade agreements with Europe and the Pacific region. We need to invest in high-tech manufacturing centers, because I want the next revolution in manufacturing to be made here in America.

Our workers are at our best when we're building stuff. So today I'm also announcing the next step in our effort to cut through redtape that keeps big construction projects from getting off the ground.

Now, some of you, if you've heard me, I'm really big on us rebuilding our .infrastructure in this country I want to put people back to work improving our roads, our bridges, our airports, our ports. We were talking about the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal is being revamped down in Panama so that it can accommodate even bigger ships. And these cargo ships are so big that if we don't remodel our ports here in the United States, they can't dock at our ports. They'll dock someplace else. We'll lose that business.

So we've got to up our game when it comes to infrastructure. And the good news is, when you do that, you're putting people back to work right away, operating dredging equipment and doing other stuff, and you're also laying the foundation for future economic growth.

Now, the problem is, we've had some trouble out of Congress just going ahead and funding——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I know, it's surprising, isn't it? [*Laughter*] But we've had some little difficulty getting our Republican friends to work with us to find a steady funding source for these projects that everybody knows needs to happen. But in fairness, one of the problems we've had in the past is, is that sometimes, it takes too long to get projects off the ground. There are all these permits and redtape and planning and this and that, and some of it's important to do, but we could do it faster.

So a while back, what I did was, I ordered everybody who was involved in approving projects to speed up the permitting process for 50 different big projects all across the country,

from the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York to the Port of Charleston in South Carolina. And we've been able to, in some cases, cut approval times from 7 years down to a year. Right? So we've made progress.

Today I'm directing agencies across the Government to do what it takes to cut timelines for breaking ground on major infrastructure projects in half. And what that will mean is, is that construction workers get back on the jobs faster. It means more money going back into local economies, and it means more demand for outstanding dredging equipment that is made right here in Baltimore.

Now, some of you know, one of the guys who has been working on this, he's Deputy Transportation Secretary John Porcari, your former transportation secretary here in Maryland before Governor O'Malley generously agreed to share him with the entire country.

So those are some of the ways that we can create the conditions for businesses like this one to generate even more good jobs. And these are the kinds of ideas that we have to stay focused on every single day. This should be our principal focus: How are we making ourselves more competitive? How are we training our workers so that they can do the jobs that need to be done? How can we make sure that we stay on the cutting edge in terms of technology? How are we making it easier for businesses to succeed?

And I'm going to keep trying to work with both parties in Washington to make progress, because our challenges are solvable. I travel all around the world, and I meet people from all walks of life. And I can tell you, there's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America. That's really true. They know we've got all the ingredients to succeed. We've got the answers. The only thing that's holding us back sometimes is a lack of political will. Sometimes, our leadership isn't focused where we need to be focused. And that's where you come in. It's up to you and all the people across the country to tell the people in Washington, focus on getting stuff done. We may not agree on the way to do certain things, but I think we all love our country. We all want what's best for our kids and our grandkids.

Wouldn't we be better off if every American could find a good job that pays the bills and lets you afford a home and maybe take a vacation, put some money away to retire? Wouldn't we all be better off if we knew that all of our kids were getting a good education from an earliest age, if we reformed our high schools for this new economy, if we're helping more young people afford to go to college?

Wouldn't we be better off if every worker's wage was a wage you could live on? Nobody wants to be on welfare. Nobody wants to have to rely on a handout. They want to work. But let's make sure that work pays.

Wouldn't we be better off if every American could afford quality healthcare and the peace of mind that comes with it? That's why we passed health care reform. Wouldn't we be better off if we did what's necessary to protect more of our children from the horrors of gun violence?

There are going to be disagreements about how we get there. But let's remind ourselves that when we work together nobody can stop us, when we do the right thing. That's what I believe. That's what I'm going to keep fighting for. That's what drives me; it's all the stories of people like you that I have the great honor of meeting and working with every single day. You deserve leaders with the same dedication and commitment and focus that the people who work at this company bring to their jobs every single day. And you look at those dredges up there—and I met folks who have worked here 38 years, some who have worked 40 years, and the pride that they take in their product and the way they all work together, that's the attitude that we've got to bring to bear here.

I think about a woman here, Myrna LaBarre. Myrna LaBarre. Where is Myrna? There's Myrna right here. [*Applause*] Myrna LaBarre. Myrna has been at Ellicott for more than 50 years. Now, that means she started when there were no child labor laws, because she—it was clearly illegal. [*Laughter*] She was

about 4 or 5, and they started putting her to work, put a broom in her hand. But when somebody asked Myrna what lessons she learned after 50 years working at the same company, she said, "Be honest, be helpful, accept your mistakes and improve upon them, be good to people, keep a good sense of humor, have the best work ethic possible, and handle the good times and get over the bad." That's a pretty good recipe for success right there. That's who we are. [*Applause*] That's who we are. Thank you, Myrna.

I mean, that pretty much sums up everything. [*Laughter*] That's who we like to understand America to be, who we are as Americans. We're honest and helpful. We work hard. We're good to others. We handle the good times, and we get over the bad times. If we keep that in mind, if we just all keep Myrna's advice in mind, keep plugging away, keep fighting, we'll build an even better America than we've got right now.

Audience member. We're praying!

The President. And I know you're going to—we can pray too; we'll add that in there. [*Laughter*]

If we work to create more jobs, if we give every American the tools that they need for those jobs, if we make sure that hard work pays off and that responsibility is rewarded, then once again, America is going to be the place where you can always make it if you try. And we'll all prosper together. And we'll make sure that America remains the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Duncan A. McTaggart, contract administrator, Peter A. Bowe, president and chief executive officer, Robert E. Croom, general manager, Martin E. Barnes, Jr., executive vice president and chief operating officer, and Myrna L. LaBarre, executive assistant, Ellicott Dredges, LLC; Ing Manuel Ordonez Galan, a former customer of Ellicott Dredges, LLC, who named a dredge after former President William J. Clinton; Ray Lewis, former linebacker, National Football League's Baltimore Ravens; Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore, MD; Ruth Cummings, mother of Rep. Elijah E. Cummings; and former Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes, father of Rep. John P. Sarbanes. He also referred to the memorandum on modernizing Federal infrastructure review and permitting regulations, policies, and procedures, which was signed on May 17 and is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Stabilization of Iraq

May 17, 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 with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2013.

Obstacles to the continued reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.