

and patience, I'm confident that we will succeed in achieving this historical mission.

I'm sorry for going too long. Thank you.

President Obama. Well, I think President Xi summarized very well the scope of our conversations. We spoke about some very specific issues; for example, President Xi mentioned the importance of military-to-military communications. In the past, we've had high-level diplomatic communications about economic and strategic issues, but we haven't always had as effective communications between our militaries. And at a time when there's so much activity around the world, it's very important that we each understand our strategic objectives at the military as well as the political levels. So that's an example of concrete progress that can advance this new model of relations between the United States and China.

So we'll be taking steps to institutionalize and regularize such discussions. But more broadly, I think President Xi identified the essence of our discussions in which we shared our respective visions for our countries' futures and agreed that we're more likely to achieve our objectives of prosperity and security of our people if we are working together cooperatively, rather than engaged in conflict.

And I emphasized my firm belief to President Xi that it is very much in the interest of the United States for China to continue its peaceful rise, because if China is successful, that helps to drive the world economy, and it puts China in the position to work with us as equal partners in dealing with many of the global challenges that no single nation can address by itself.

The President's Weekly Address

June 8, 2013

Hi, everybody. In the next few days, America will take an important step towards fixing our broken immigration system. The entire United States Senate will begin debating a commonsense immigration reform bill that has bipartisan support.

We define ourselves as a nation of immigrants. The promise we find in those who come

So, for example, neither country by itself can deal with the challenge of climate change. That's an issue that we'll have to deal with together. China, as the largest country, as it continues to develop, will be a larger and larger carbon emitter unless we find new mechanisms for green growth. The United States, we have the largest carbon footprint per capita in the world; we've got to bring down our carbon levels in order to accommodate continued growth. And so that will translate then into opportunities for specific work around green technologies and research and development and interactions between our scientists so that we can, together, help advance the goal of a sustainable planet, even as we continue to grow and develop.

We've got a lot of work to do to take these broad understandings down to the level of specifics and that will require further discussions not only today and tomorrow, but for weeks, months, years to come. But what I'm very encouraged about is that both President Xi and myself recognize we have a unique opportunity to take the U.S.-China relationship to a new level. And I am absolutely committed to making sure that we don't miss that opportunity.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:09 p.m. at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands. President Xi referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Yi Wang and Minister of National Defense Chang Wanquan of China. President Xi and a reporter spoke in Chinese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

from every corner of the globe has always been one of our greatest strengths. It's kept our workforce vibrant and dynamic, it's kept our businesses on the cutting edge, and it's helped build the greatest economic engine the world has ever known. But for years, our out-of-date immigration system has actually harmed our economy and threatened our security.

Now, over the past 4 years, we've taken steps to try to patch up some of the worst cracks in the system. We strengthened security on the southern border by putting more boots on the ground than at any time in our history. And in part by using technology more effectively, today, illegal crossings are near their lowest level in decades. We focused enforcement efforts on criminals who are here illegally—who endanger our communities—and today, we deport more criminals than ever before.

And we took up the cause of DREAMers, the young people who were brought to this country as children. We said that if they're able to meet certain criteria, we'd consider offering them the chance to come out of the shadows so they can continue to work here and study here and contribute to our communities legally.

But if we're going to truly fix a broken system, we need Congress to act in a comprehensive way. And that's why what's happening next week is so important. Now, the bill before the Senate isn't perfect; it's a compromise. Nobody will get everything they want: not Democrats, not Republicans, not me. But it is a bill that's largely consistent with the principles I've repeatedly laid out for commonsense immigration reform.

This bill would continue to strengthen security at our borders, increase criminal penalties against smugglers and traffickers, and hold employers more accountable if they knowingly hire undocumented workers. If enacted, it would represent the most ambitious enforcement plan in recent memory.

This bill would provide a pathway to earned citizenship for the 11 million individuals who are already in this country illegally, a pathway that includes passing a background check, learning English, paying taxes and a penalty, and then going to the back of the line, behind everyone who's playing by the rules and trying to come here legally.

This bill would modernize the legal immigration system so that, alongside training

American workers for the jobs of tomorrow, we're also attracting highly skilled entrepreneurs and engineers who will grow our economy, and so that our people don't have to wait years before their loved ones are able to join them in this country that we love.

That's what immigration reform looks like: smarter enforcement, a pathway to earn citizenship, improvements to the legal immigration system. They're all commonsense steps. They've got broad support from Republicans and Democrats, CEOs and labor leaders, law enforcement and clergy. So there is no reason that Congress can't work together to send a bill to my desk by the end of the summer.

We know the opponents of reform are going to do everything they can to prevent that. They'll try to stoke fear and create division. They'll try to play politics with an issue that the vast majority of Americans want addressed. And if they succeed, we will lose this chance to finally fix an immigration system that is badly broken.

So if you agree that now is the time for commonsense reform, reach out to your representatives. Tell them we have to get this done so that everyone is playing by the same rules. Tell them we have the power to do this in a way that lives up to our traditions as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

In the end, that's what this is all about. Men and women who want nothing more than the chance to earn their way into the American story, just like so many of our ancestors did. Throughout our history, that has only made us stronger. And it's how we'll make sure that America's best days always lie ahead.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:25 p.m. on June 6 in the band room at Mooresville Middle School in Mooresville, NC, for broadcast on June 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 8.