

Jan. 29 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

And they will continue to find a partner in the United States of America.

NOTE: In his remarks, the President referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. The Of-

fice of the Press Secretary also released an Arabic language transcript of this address. Recording information was unavailable.

Statement on the Resignation of Raymond H. LaHood as Secretary of Transportation *January 29, 2013*

I want to thank Secretary LaHood for his dedication, his hard work, and his years of service to the American people, including the outstanding work he's done over the last 4 years as Secretary of Transportation. I also want to thank Ray for his friendship. Years ago, we were drawn together by a shared belief that those of us in public service owe an allegiance not to party or faction, but to the people we were elected to represent. And Ray has never wavered in that belief.

As Secretary of Transportation, he has fought to create jobs and grow our economy by re-

building our roads, bridges, and transit systems. Under his leadership, we have made significant investments in our passenger rail system and laid the groundwork for the high-speed rail network of the future. And every American who travels by air, rail, or highway can thank Ray for his commitment to making our entire transportation system safer and stronger. I am grateful to Ray for everything he's done, and I wish him only the best going forward.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of John F. Kerry as Secretary of State *January 29, 2013*

I am pleased that the Senate has confirmed John Kerry as our next Secretary of State with overwhelming bipartisan support. From his decorated service in Vietnam to his decades in the Senate as a champion of American global leadership, John's distinguished career has prepared him to guide American diplomacy in the years ahead.

John has earned the respect of leaders around the world and the confidence of Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, and I am confident he will make an extraordinary Secretary of State. I look forward to his counsel and partnership in the years ahead as we ensure American leadership in the world and advance the interests and values that keep our Nation strong.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Regarding the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 *January 29, 2013*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 902 of the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, I hereby designate as emergency requirements all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Bal-

anced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Regarding the Waiver of Sanctions Against North Korea January 31, 2013

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 1405 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252) (the “Act”), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing the enclosed report prepared by my Administration. The report includes information related to the issuance of any waivers under the authority of section 1405 of the Act of certain sanctions against North Korea and to certain other matters relating to North Korea.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Barbara A. Mikulski, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl M. Levin, chairman, and James M. Inhofe, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; John F. Kerry, chairman, and Robert P. Corker, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Nita M. Lowey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, chairman, and Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Edward R. Royce, chairman, and Eliot L. Engel, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Remarks on Presenting the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Technology and Innovation February 1, 2013

The President. Thank you so much. Please, everyone have a seat. Well, it is my incredible pleasure and honor to welcome this incredibly talented group of men and women in the White House. And I want to congratulate them on earning America’s highest honor for invention and discovery: the National Medals of Science and the National Medals of Technology and Innovation.

Before we start, I want to acknowledge the head of the National Science Foundation, Dr. Subra Suresh, as well as the members of my Cabinet who are with us here today. Where is everybody? Where did Subra go? *[Laughter]* There you go. All right, I just wanted to make sure they all showed up.

I especially want to thank Secretary Steven Chu, who announced this morning that he will

be leaving the Department of Energy. That will be a loss for us. Steve has been a great friend, a tremendous colleague over the past 4 years, working on a whole range of energy issues, but also designing a cap to plug a hole in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico when nobody else could figure it out. And that’s typical of the incredible contributions that he’s made to this country. Because of his leadership, this country is further along on the path to energy independence. It’s better positioned for the jobs and industries of the future.

So, Steve, you have earned more than your fair share of relaxation time, but we are grateful for your extraordinary service. So thank you.

Now, this is the most collection of brainpower we’ve had under this roof in a long time—*[laughter]*—maybe since the last time we gave