

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 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

## Medal of Science and the National

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

out these medals. I have no way to prove that, and I know this crowd likes proof. [Laughter] But I can't imagine too many people competing with those who we honor here today.

If there is one idea that sets this country apart, one idea that makes us different from every other nation on Earth, it's that here in America, success does not depend on where you were born or what your last name is. Success depends on the ideas that you can dream up, the possibilities that you envision, and the hard work, the blood, sweat, and tears you're willing to put in to make them real.

We don't always recognize the genius behind these ideas right away. The New York Times once described Robert Goddard's belief that rockets could one day go to the Moon as, quote, "lacking the knowledge ladled out daily in high schools." [Laughter] One engineer called Einstein's brand-new theory of relativity "voodoo nonsense." But with enough time, we usually come around. And we don't give folks the same treatment that Galileo got when he came up with new ideas. [Laughter] And today, it's clearer than ever that our future as a nation depends on keeping that spirit of curiosity and innovation alive in our time.

So these honorees are at the forefront of that mission. Thanks to the sacrifices they've made, the chances they've taken, the gallons of coffee they've consumed—[laughter]—we now have batteries that power everything from cell phones to electric cars. We have a map of the human genome and new ways to produce renewable energy. We're learning to grow organs in the lab and better understand what's happening in our deepest oceans. And if that's not enough, the people on this stage are also going to be responsible for devising a formula to tame frizzy hair—[laughter]—as well as inspiring the game Tetris.

But what also makes these individuals unique is how they've gotten here: the obstacles they've overcome and the commitments they've made to push the boundaries of our understanding.

Jim Gates's father, for example, was in the Army, and by the time Jim was in sixth grade, he had attended six different schools. But he

still remembers the day he came home and saw his father standing on the porch with a big smile on his face. And that's how Jim knew he had gotten into MIT, on his way to becoming one of our foremost experts in supersymmetry and string theory.

When Gholam Peyman first accepted a position at the University of Illinois, his office was a converted restroom. [Laughter] But he carved out enough space for himself, his secretary, and his lab equipment. And today, he's known as the father of LASIK eye surgery.

Sandra Moore Faber had a passion for astronomy from the very beginning. But when she visited one of our Nation's top observatories as a grad student, they didn't have a dorm for female astronomers, so Sandra ended up sleeping on the sofa in the caretaker's cottage. Now, luckily, that didn't slow her down, and she became one of the world's foremost experts in the evolution of the universe.

You know, in a global economy where the best jobs follow talent—whether in Calcutta or Cleveland—we need to do everything we can to encourage that same kind of passion, make it easier for more young people to blaze a new trail.

Right now only about a third of undergraduate students are graduating with degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math, areas that will be crucial if we expect to complete the work that has been done by these folks and compete for the jobs of the future. And that's why we've worked to make more affordable college opportunities and set a goal of training 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next decade. And we're working to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills businesses are looking for right now.

We also need to do something about all the students who come here from around the world to study, but we then send home once they graduate. On Tuesday, I was in Las Vegas talking about the need for comprehensive immigration reform. And one important piece of that reform is allowing more of the best and brightest minds from around the world to start businesses, initiate new discoveries, create jobs

here in the United States of America. If we want to grow our economy and strengthen the middle class, we need an immigration system built for the 21st century. It's that simple.

One of the scientists being honored today is Jan Vilcek. Jan was born in Slovakia to Jewish parents who fled the Nazis during World War II. To keep their young son safe, his parents placed him in an orphanage run by Catholic nuns. And later, he and his mother were taken in by some brave farmers in a remote Slovak village and hidden until the war was over. And today, Jan is a pioneer in the study of the immune system and the treatment of inflammatory diseases like arthritis.

People like Jan obviously had enormous talent. In some fundamental ways, they were destined to be on this stage. The minds they were born with, the drive they innately possess, the positive forces that shaped their lives were more powerful than the forces aligned against them. So they beat the odds. But even with all those gifts, every one of today's honorees also had somebody who offered them a hand: a teacher who sparked their interest, a scholarship that paved the way, and an opportunity to come to America and bring even the most distant dream within our reach.

And that reminds us of our obligations to each other and to this country. We can—no matter how many talented folks there are in this country, if we're not offering a hand up, a lot of those folks are going to miss out on what might be their destiny. We can make it easier for our young people to learn the skills of the future. We can attract the brightest minds to our shore. We can celebrate and lift up and spotlight researchers and scientists like the ones here today, so that somewhere, a boy on an Army base or a girl looking through a telescope or a young scientist working out of a converted bathroom can make it their goal to stand where these honorees will be standing when they receive their medals.

That's what we can do and that's what we must do. That's what I intend to do as long as I'm President.

So I want to congratulate these extraordinary Americans once again for all their accom-

plishments. I want to wish our Military Aides the best of luck as they attempt to read the citations. [Laughter] Because I can assure you they practiced hard on this all week long.

You good? You feel good? [Laughter] All right. There are a lot of syllables in some of these things. [Laughter] I won't know the difference, but they will. [Laughter]

Congratulations, everybody.

[At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Scott Phy, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citations and the President presented the medals, assisted by Lt. Cmdr. Tiffany Hill, USN, Navy Aide to the President.]

*The President.* That wasn't bad. [Laughter]

Well, again, I just want to congratulate all the honorees here today. Can everybody please give them one more big round of applause? [Applause]

We are so grateful to all of you. The incredible contributions that you've made have enhanced our lives in immeasurable ways, in ways that are practical, but also inspirational.

And so we know that you are going to continue to inspire and in many cases teach the next generation of inventors and scientists who will discover things that we can't even dream of at this point. So thank you so much for everything that you've done.

I hope that all of you enjoy this wonderful reception. Feel free to party here. [Laughter] This looks like a somewhat wild crowd. [Laughter] So just remember there are Secret Service here—[laughter]—if you guys get out of hand. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. Participating in the ceremony were National Medal of Science recipients Allen J. Bard; Sallie W. Chisholm; Sidney D. Drell; Sandra M. Faber; S. James Gates, Jr.; Solomon W. Golomb; John B. Goodenough; M. Frederick Hawthorne; Leroy Hood; Barry C. Mazur; Lucy Shapiro; and Anne M. Treisman; and National Medal of Technology and Innovation recipients Frances H. Arnold; George Carruthers; Robert Langer;

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Norman R. McCombs; Ghulam A. Peyman; Arthur H. Rosenfield; Jan T. Vilcek; Rangaswamy Srinivasan; James Wynne; and Edward Campbell, accepting on behalf of Raytheon

BBN Technologies in Cambridge, MA. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

### Statement on the Resignation of Steven Chu as Secretary of Energy *February 1, 2013*

I want to thank Secretary Chu for his dedicated service on behalf of the American people. As a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, Steve brought to the Energy Department a unique understanding of both the urgent challenge presented by climate change and the tremendous opportunity that clean energy represents for our economy. And during his time as Secretary, Steve helped my administration move America towards real energy independence. Over the

past 4 years, we have doubled the use of renewable energy, dramatically reduced our dependence on foreign oil, and put our country on a path to win the global race for clean energy jobs. Thanks to Steve, we also expanded support for our brightest engineers and entrepreneurs as they pursue groundbreaking innovations that could transform our energy future. I am grateful that Steve agreed to join in my Cabinet, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

### Statement on the Death of Edward I. Koch *February 1, 2013*

Ed Koch was an extraordinary mayor, irrepressible character, and quintessential New Yorker. He took office at a time when New York was in fiscal crisis and helped his city achieve economic renewal, expand affordable housing, and extend opportunity to more of its people. In public office and beyond, his

energy, force of personality, and commitment to causes ranging from civic issues to the security of the State of Israel always informed and enlivened the public discourse. Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to Ed's loved ones and to the city that survives him.

### Statement on the Resignation of Mark J. Sullivan as Director of the United States Secret Service *February 1, 2013*

I want to thank Mark Sullivan for nearly 30 years of service to our Nation at the United States Secret Service, a tenure that saw the agency protect five First Families, including my own. Mark started out in the Detroit field office before joining the Presidential Protective Division. And since 2006, as Director, Mark has led the agency with incredible dedication and integrity. The Secret Service is best known for

protecting our Nation's leaders, but every day they also protect the American people. From securing large events such as Presidential Inaugurations to safeguarding our financial system, the men and women of the agency perform their mission with professionalism and dedication. That is a testament to Mark and his steadfast leadership, which will be missed. Michelle and I wish him all the best.