

Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia  
September 11, 2013

*The President.* Good morning.

*Audience members.* Good morning!

*The President.* From Scripture, we learn of the miracle of restoration: “You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again. From the depths of the Earth, you will bring me up again. You will increase my greatness and comfort me again.”

Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, members of our Armed Forces, and most of all, the survivors who bear the wounds of that day and the families of those we lost, it is an honor to be with you here again to remember the tragedy of 12 Septembers ago, to honor the greatness of all who responded, and to stand with those who still grieve and to provide them some measure of comfort once more. Together, we pause, and we pray, and we give humble thanks—as families and as a nation—for the strength and the grace that, from the depths of our despair, has brought us up again, has revived us again, has given us strength to keep on.

We pray for the memory of all those taken from us, nearly 3,000 innocent souls. Our hearts still ache for the futures snatched away, the lives that might have been, the parents who would have known the joys of being grandparents, the fathers and mothers who would have known the pride of a child’s graduation, the sons and daughters who would have grown, maybe married and been blessed with children of their own. Those beautiful boys and girls just beginning to find their way, who today would have been teenagers and young men and women looking ahead, imagining the mark they’d make on the world.

They left this Earth. They slipped from our grasp. But it was written, “What the heart has once owned and had, it shall never lose.” What your families lost in the temporal, in the here and now, is now eternal: the pride that you carry in your hearts, the love that will never die, your loved ones’ everlasting place in America’s heart.

We pray for you, their families, who have known the awful depths of loss. And in the quiet moments we have spent together and from the stories that you’ve shared, I’m amazed at the will that you’ve summoned in your lives to lift yourselves up and to carry on and to live and love and laugh again.

Even more than memorials of stone and water, your lives are the greatest tribute to those that we lost. For their legacy shines on in you: when you smile just like him, when you toss your hair just like her, when you foster scholarships and service projects that bear the name and—of those we lost and make a better world. When you join the firehouse or you put on the uniform or you devote yourself to a cause greater than yourself, just like they did, that’s a testimony to them. And in your resilience, you have taught us all, there is no trouble we cannot endure and there is no calamity we cannot overcome.

We pray for all those who have stepped forward in those years of war: diplomats who serve in dangerous posts, as we saw this day last year in Benghazi; intelligence professionals, often unseen and unheralded, who protect us in every way; our men and women in uniform who defend this country that we love.

Today we remember not only those who died that September day. We pay solemn tribute to more than 6,700 patriots who have given their full measure since: military and civilians. We see their legacy in the friendships they forged, the attacks they prevented, the innocent lives they saved, and in their comrades in Afghanistan who are completing the mission and who by the end of next year will have helped to end this war.

So this is the path that we’ve traveled together. These are the wounds that continue to heal. And this is the faith in God and each other that carries us through, that restores us, and that we summon once more each time we come to hallowed ground, beside this building or in a Pennsylvania field or where the towers

once stood. Here, in such moments of grace, we are renewed. And it is here that we reaffirm the values and virtues that must guide us.

Let us have the strength to face the threats that endure, different though they may be from 12 years ago, so that as long as there are those who would strike our citizens, we will stand vigilant and defend our Nation.

Let us have the wisdom to know that while force is at times necessary, force alone cannot build the world we seek. So we recommit to the partnerships and progress that builds mutual respect and deepens trust and allows more people to live in dignity, prosperity, and freedom.

Let us have the confidence in the values that make us Americans, which we must never lose: the shining liberties that make us a beacon of

the world, the rich diversity that makes us stronger, the unity and commitment to one another that we sustain on this National Day of Service and Remembrance.

And above all, let us have the courage, like the survivors and families here today, to carry on, no matter how dark the night or how difficult the day. “You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again. And from the depths of the Earth, you will bring me up again. You will increase my greatness and you will comfort me again.”

May God bless the memory of those that we lost. May He comfort you and your families, and may God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:32 a.m.

## Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting *September 12, 2013*

Well, obviously, we’re missing a few members of our Cabinet here today. In particular, John Kerry is overseas meeting on a topic that we’ve been spending a lot of time on over the last several weeks: the situation in Syria and how we can make sure that chemical weapons are not used against innocent people.

I am hopeful that the discussions that Senator—Secretary Kerry had with Foreign Minister Lavrov, as well as some of the other players in this, can yield a concrete result. And I know that he is going to be working very hard over the next several days to see what the possibilities are there.

But even as we have been spending a lot of time on the Syria issue and making sure that international attention is focused on the horrible tragedy that occurred there, it is still important to recognize that we’ve got a lot more stuff to do here in this Government.

The American people are still interested in making sure that our kids are getting the kind of education they deserve; that we’re putting people back to work; that we are dealing properly with a Federal budget; that bills are getting paid on time; that the full faith and credit of the United States is preserved; and that the

Federal Government itself is, in every single agency, running the way it should and making sure that our constituents and the American people are getting a good deal.

So we’re going to spend some time here today talking about all the efforts that have been made by many of these Cabinet Secretaries to streamline operations, to cut out waste, to improve performance, to improve customer satisfaction. We’re going to focus on some specific issues, including managing some of the budget debates that are going to be taking place over the next several weeks.

We’re going to be talking about the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, where we’ve seen some tremendous progress over the last several months and are confident that starting at the beginning of next month, people are going to be able to start signing up for health care, in many cases, for the first time. And we’re going to spend some time talking about issues like comprehensive immigration reform that are still of enormous importance to ensure that America grows.

So I appreciate all the great work that people have done. Some of the Cabinet members here are still relatively new, but thanks to their