

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

Sept. 12 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

confirmations and the great teams they put around them, I know that they're hitting the ground running. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Principles for Modernizing the Military Compensation and Retirement Systems  
September 12, 2013

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 674(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, Public Law 112-239, January 2, 2013, I hereby transmit principles for modernizing the military compensation

and retirement systems requested by the Act.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
September 12, 2013.

Letter to the Chairman of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission Transmitting Principles for Modernizing the Military Compensation and Retirement Systems  
September 12, 2013

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 674(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, Public Law 112-239, January 2, 2013, I hereby transmit to you and the other members of the Military Compensation and Retirement Commission, the principles for modernizing the military compensation and retirement systems requested by the Act.

I wish the Commission success in its important work.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The letter was sent to Alphonso Maldon, Jr., Chairman, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait  
September 13, 2013

*President Obama.* It's a great pleasure to welcome our friend, the Amir of Kuwait, to the Oval Office. Kuwait is one of our most important partners in the region, and we have a very strong bilateral defense agreement, as well as working together on a whole range of economic and social and security issues.

We had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues. Obviously, at the top of the list

was the situation in Syria. Our two countries are in agreement that the use of chemical weapons that we saw in Syria was a criminal act and that it is absolutely important for the international community to respond in not only deterring repeated use of chemical weapons, but hopefully, getting those chemical weapons outside of Syria.

I shared with the Amir my hope that the negotiations that are currently taking place be-