

## Statement on the Resignation of Eugene B. Sperling as Director of the National Economic Council and the Appointment of Jeffrey D. Zients as Director of the National Economic Council

*September 13, 2013*

Over the past 4½ years, Gene has been one of my closest advisors and a close friend. Gene understands better than anybody that our top priority as a nation is making sure that our economy once again works for working Americans. Gene’s impact in this administration began at Treasury, where he helped us avoid a second Great Depression and led efforts to pass a Small Business Jobs Act to help entrepreneurs grow. He has been a tireless proponent of efforts to strengthen the recovery and make our Tax Code more fair, whether in helping to design the payroll tax cut, fighting for job-creating tax credits for tens of millions of hard-working Americans or developing the “American Jobs Act.” He was central to designing policies to help support the housing recovery and was a driving force behind our manufacturing agenda and our efforts to attract jobs and investment to the United States.

Gene’s relentless work ethic, sharp intellect, and ability to work across the aisle have been instrumental in our efforts to build a better

bargain for the middle class and reduce the deficit while also protecting the most vulnerable. I want to thank Gene and his family for their service, and I look forward to having his counsel for the rest of the year.

Today I’m also proud to name Jeff Zients as the next Director of the National Economic Council. Before heading up the Office of Management and Budget, Jeff spent decades as a successful entrepreneur in the private sector. Jeff has a sterling reputation as a business leader, and he earned the admiration and respect of everyone he worked with during his 4 years in leadership positions at the Office of Management and Budget. I am certain that in Jeff’s hands we will continue to have strong leadership of our economic policy team, and his advice will be critical as we keep moving this country forward and building an economy where everyone who works hard can get ahead.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a biography of Mr. Zients.

## The President’s Weekly Address

*September 14, 2013*

This week, when I addressed the Nation on Syria, I said that, in part because of the credible threat of U.S. military force, there is the possibility of a diplomatic solution. Russia has indicated a new willingness to join with the international community in pushing Syria to give up its chemical weapons, which the Asad regime used in an attack that killed more than a thousand people on August 21. I also asked Congress to postpone a vote on the use of military force while we pursue this diplomatic path. And that’s what we’re doing.

At my direction, Secretary of State Kerry is in discussions with his Russian counterpart. But we’re making it clear that this can’t be a stalling tactic. Any agreement needs to verify

that the Asad regime and Russia are keeping their commitments. That means working to turn Syria’s chemical weapons over to international control and ultimately destroying them. This would allow us to achieve our goal: deterring the Syrian regime from using chemical weapons, degrading their ability to use them, and making it clear to the world that we won’t tolerate their use.

We’ve seen indications of progress. As recently as a week ago, the Asad regime would not admit that it possessed chemical weapons. Today, it does. Syria has signaled a willingness to join with 189 other nations, representing 98 percent of humanity, in abiding by an international agreement that prohibits the use of