

We give thanks for the freedoms they defend: the freedom to think what we want and say what we think; to worship according to our own beliefs; to choose our leaders and, yes, criticize them without punishment. People around the world are fighting and even dying for their chance at these freedoms. We stand with them in that struggle, and we give thanks for being free.

And we give thanks to everyone who's doing their part to make the United States a better, more compassionate nation, who spend their Thanksgiving volunteering at a soup kitchen or joining a service project or bringing food and cheer to a lonely neighbor. That big-hearted generosity is a central part of our American character. We believe in lending a hand to folks who need it. We believe in pitching in to solve problems even if they aren't our problems. And that's not a 1-day-a-year belief, it's part of the fabric of our Nation.

And we remember that many Americans need that helping hand right now: Americans who've lost their jobs and can't get a new one

through no fault of their own, Americans who have been trapped in poverty and just need that helping hand to climb out, citizens whose prayers and hopes move us to act.

We're a people who are greater together than we are on our own. And that's what today is about. That's what every day should be about. No matter what our differences, we're all part of one American family. We're each other's keepers. We are one Nation under God. That core tenet of our American experience has guided us from the earliest days of our founding, and it will guide us to a future that's even brighter than today.

Thank you, God bless you, and from my family to yours, happy Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:20 p.m. on November 27 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on November 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 28.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Implementation Plan for the Whole-of-Government Vision Prescribed in the 2010 National Security Strategy *November 29, 2013*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In my National Security Strategy of 2010, I addressed how the United States would strengthen its global leadership position; end the war in Iraq; disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida; and achieve economic recovery at home and abroad. The Strategy recognized that we faced a world in transition; that we needed to reposition the United States to shape that transition effectively to meet our interests, and that, to be effective, a whole-of-government approach was necessary. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, section 1072, reinforced the importance of whole-of-government integration in this effort. In accordance with section 1072, I provided an implementation plan in September 2012 detailing

our work to date to advance the whole-of-government effort.

I am writing to inform you of my intent to release a new National Security Strategy in early 2014. The new Strategy will update the vision I provided in 2010 and describe my Administration's national security priorities for the remainder of my term. Accordingly, we will submit a broader update on the whole-of-government implementation plan in the spring to reflect this new Strategy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Barbara A. Mikulski, chairman, and Richard C. Shelby, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl M. Levin, chairman, and

James M. Inhofe, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Patricia L. Murray, chairman, and Jefferson B. Sessions III, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Budget; Robert Menendez, chairman, and Robert P. Corker, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Thomas R. Carper, chairman, and Thomas A. Coburn, ranking member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Dianne Feinstein, chairman, and C. Saxby Chambliss, vice chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, and Charles E. Grassley, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Nita M. Lowey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Howard P. “Buck” McKe-

on, chairman, and Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; Paul D. Ryan, chairman, and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Budget; Edward R. Royce, chairman, and Eliot L. Engel, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Michael T. McCaul, chairman, and Bennie G. Thompson, ranking member, House Committee on Homeland Security; Michael J. Rogers, chairman, and Charles A. “Dutch” Ruppertsberger, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Robert W. Goodlatte, chairman, and John J. Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; and Darrell E. Issa, chairman, and Elijah E. Cummings, ranking member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

## Remarks on World AIDS Day *December 2, 2013*

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, thank you, Grant, for your outstanding leadership of the Office of National AIDS Policy. And thanks to all of you for being here. This is a pretty distinguished crowd, I have to say, and it is wonderful to be here.

I should say, actually, welcome back, because many of you have joined us before as we’ve marked new milestones in our fight against HIV and AIDS. And I’m honored that you could join us in commemorating World AIDS Day, which was yesterday. And this is a time for remembering the friends and loved ones that we’ve lost, celebrating the extraordinary progress—thanks to some people in this room—that we’ve been able to make, and most importantly, recommitting ourselves to the mission that we share, which is achieving an AIDS-free generation.

I especially want to welcome ministers from our partner countries; members of my administration, including Secretary Sebelius, Secretary John Kerry; Congresswoman Barbara Lee; Mark Dybul from the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. And we’ve also got here Francis Collins from the National Institutes of Health; Michel Sidibé from UN-

AIDS; Deborah von Zinkernagel, who’s carrying on the great work of Eric Goosby as our Acting Global AIDS Coordinator; and our many friends from the philanthropic world, including Bill Gates. So thank you all for joining us here today.

Every year, this is a moment to reflect on how far we’ve come since the early days of the AIDS epidemic. And those of you who lived through it remember all too well the fear and the stigma and how hard people with HIV had to fight to be seen or heard or to be treated with basic compassion. And you remember how little we knew about how to prevent AIDS or how to treat it. What we did know was the devastation that it inflicted, striking down vibrant men and women in the prime of their lives and spreading from city to city and country to country seemingly overnight.

Today, that picture is transformed. Thanks to the courage and love of so many of you in this room and around the world, awareness has soared, research has surged. Prevention, treatment, and care are now saving millions of lives, not only in the world’s richest countries, but in some of the world’s poorest countries as well. And for many, with testing and access to the