

commit to dialogue, and take immediate steps to urge calm and support reconciliation. South Sudan's leaders must recognize that compromise with one's political enemy is difficult, but recovering from unchecked violence and unleashed hatred will prove much harder.

Too much blood has been spilled and too many lives have been lost to allow South Su-

dan's moment of hope and opportunity to slip from its grasp. Now is the time for South Sudan's leaders to show courage and leadership, to reaffirm their commitment to peace, to unity, and to a better future for their people. The United States will remain a steady partner of the South Sudanese people as they seek the security and prosperity they deserve.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to South Sudan

December 19, 2013

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On December 18, 2013, approximately 45 U.S. Armed Forces personnel deployed to South Sudan to support the security of U.S. personnel and our Embassy. Although equipped for combat, this force was deployed for the purpose of protecting U.S. citizens and property. This force will remain in South Sudan until the security situation becomes such that it is no longer needed.

This action has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority

to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The President's News Conference

December 20, 2013

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I know you are all eager to skip town and spend some time with your families. Not surprisingly, I am too. But you know what they say: It's the most wonderful press conference of the year—[laughter]—right now. [Laughter] I am eager to take your questions, but first, I just want to say a few words about our economy.

In 2013, our businesses created another 2 million jobs, adding up to more than 8 million in just over the past 45 months. This morning we learned that over the summer, our economy grew at its strongest pace in nearly 2 years. The unemployment rate has steadily fallen to its lowest point in 5 years. Our Tax Code is

fairer, and our fiscal situation is firmer, with deficits that are now less than half of what they were when I took office.

For the first time in nearly two decades, we now produce more oil here at home than we buy from the rest of the world, and our all-of-the-above strategy for new American energy means lower energy costs. The Affordable Care Act has helped keep health care costs growing at their slowest rate in 50 years. Combined, that means bigger paychecks for middle class families and bigger savings for businesses looking to invest and hire here in America.

And for all the challenges we've had and all the challenges that we've been working on