

Today I instructed Secretary Hagel and Chairman Dempsey to continue their efforts to make substantial improvements with respect to sexual assault prevention and response, including to the military justice system. I have also directed that they report back to me, with a full-scale review of their prog-

ress, by December 1, 2014. If I do not see the kind of progress I expect, then we will consider additional reforms that may be required to eliminate this crime from our military ranks and protect our brave servicemembers who stand guard for us every day at home and around the world.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of John A. Koskinen as Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service

December 20, 2013

I applaud the bipartisan majority of Senators who today confirmed John Koskinen as the next Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service. John has decades of private and public sector experience, and he has led institutions in challenging times. Throughout his career, John has always acted with the absolute integrity Ameri-

cans demand from those in public service, and his strong leadership and unquestioned expertise make him the right person to lead the IRS. I want to thank Daniel Werfel for his outstanding service as Principal Deputy Commissioner of the IRS, and I look forward to working with John as he takes on this new role.

The President's Weekly Address

December 21, 2013

Hi, everybody. This week, Congress finished up some important work before heading home for the holidays.

For the first time in years, both parties came together in the spirit of compromise to pass a budget, one that helps chart our economic course for the next 2 years. This budget will unwind some of the damaging cuts that have threatened students and seniors and held back our businesses. It clears the path for critical investments in the things that grow our economy and strengthen our middle class, like education and research. And it will keep reducing our deficits, at a time when we've seen 4 years of the fastest deficit reduction since the end of World War II.

Members of Congress also voted to finally allow several dedicated and well-qualified public servants to do their jobs for the American people, many of whom waited months for a simple yes-or-no vote. These are judges, Cabinet Secretaries, and military leaders. They're men and women charged with growing our economy, keeping our homeland secure, and

making sure our housing system and financial system work for ordinary Americans.

So after a year of showdowns and obstruction that only held back our economy, we've been able to break the logjam a bit over the last few weeks. It's a hopeful sign that we can end the cycle of shortsighted, crisis-driven decisionmaking and actually work together to get things done. And that's important because there's plenty of work to do.

Right now, because Congress failed to act before leaving on vacation, more than 1 million Americans are poised to lose a vital source of income just a few days after Christmas. For many people who are still looking for work, unemployment insurance is a lifeline that can make the difference between temporary hardship or lasting catastrophe. Instead of punishing these families who can least afford it—especially now—Congress should first restore that lifeline immediately, then put our entire focus on creating more good jobs that pay good wages.

That's what I'll be focused on next year and every day I have the privilege of being your President: growing the economy, expanding

opportunity, building an America that offers everyone who works hard the chance to get ahead and every child a fair shot at success.

And if Congress continues to act in the spirit of cooperation we've seen in recent weeks, I'm confident we can make much more progress together in the year to come.

Thanks, and have a great weekend and a very merry Christmas.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 19 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 21. In the address, the President referred to H.J. Res. 59. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 20, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 21.

Statement on the Death of John S.D. Eisenhower *December 22, 2013*

Michelle and I send our condolences to the Eisenhower family on the passing of John S.D. Eisenhower. He grew up the son of an American hero, but emerged a great American in his own right: a brave soldier who served in World War II, the Korean war, and ultimately retired with the rank of Brigadier General; an accomplished writer and historian; a talented diplo-

mat. His was a big and quintessentially American life, one of patriotism and character, learning and teaching, and a deep and abiding sense of service to his country. Our thoughts and prayers are with John's wife Joanne, his son David, his daughters Barbara Anne, Susan, and Mary, and his grandchildren, along with our gratitude for his extraordinary life.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to South Sudan *December 22, 2013*

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

In my report to the Congress of December 19, 2013, I provided information on the deployment of U.S. forces to support the security of U.S. personnel and our Embassy in South Sudan. I am providing this additional report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on U.S. military activities in South Sudan.

On December 21, 2013, approximately 46 additional U.S. military personnel deployed by military aircraft to the area of Bor, South Sudan, to conduct an operation to evacuate U.S. citizens and personnel. After the aircraft came under fire as they approached Bor, the operation was curtailed due to security considerations, and the aircraft and all military person-

nel onboard departed South Sudan without completing the evacuation.

The purpose of this operation was to protect U.S. citizens, personnel, and property. As I monitor the situation in South Sudan, I may take further action to support the security of U.S. citizens, personnel, and property, including our Embassy, in South Sudan.

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 appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA