

United States; they are increasingly entrenched in the operations of certain foreign governments and the international financial system, thereby weakening democratic institutions, degrading the rule of law, and undermining economic markets. These organizations facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts and increasingly facilitate the activities of other dangerous persons.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the

United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 with respect to transnational criminal organizations.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Weekly Address

July 20, 2013

Hi, everybody. Three years ago this weekend, we put into place tough new rules of the road for the financial sector so that irresponsible behavior on the part of a few could never again cause a crisis that harms millions of middle class families.

As part of that reform, we set up the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the first-ever independent consumer watchdog with one job: to protect families from that sort of behavior.

Two years ago, I nominated a man named Rich Cordray, a former attorney general from Ohio, to run this consumer protection bureau. But Republicans in the Senate refused to give him a simple up-or-down vote, not because they didn't think he was the right person for the job, but because they didn't like the law that set up the consumer watchdog in the first place.

So last year, I acted on my own to put him in charge, because without a Director, the CFPB couldn't use all the tools at its disposal to protect consumers from shady mortgage lenders or unscrupulous credit reporting agencies or predatory lenders who targeted veterans and seniors. And I'm pleased to say that Rich Cordray was finally confirmed this week by a bipartisan vote.

Because of the work that's been done at the CFPB over the past 2 years, today, mortgage lenders, student lenders, payday lenders, and credit reporting and debt collection agencies

all face greater scrutiny. And if they don't play by the rules, you now have somewhere to go to get some measure of justice. In fact, the CFPB has already addressed more than 175,000 complaints from every State.

Today, as part of the CFPB's "Know Before You Owe" efforts, students and their parents can get a simple report with the information they need to make informed decisions before taking out student loans, and more than 700 colleges have stepped up to make this information clear and transparent. And if you've noticed that some credit card forms are actually easier to understand than they used to be, that's because of the work that Rich's team and others in the administration have done.

Today, veterans have the tools they need to defend against dishonest lenders and mortgage brokers who try to prey on them when they come home. Seniors are better protected from someone who sees their home or retirement savings as an easy target. And thanks to the hard work of folks at the CFPB, so far 6 million Americans have gotten more than \$400 million in refunds from companies that engaged in unscrupulous practices. That's money we didn't have the power to recover before.

You know, we've come a long way over the past 4½ years. Our economy's growing. Our businesses have created 7.2 million new jobs in the past 40 months. We've locked in new safeguards to protect against another crisis and end

bailouts for good. And even though more work remains, our financial system is more fair and much more sound than it was.

We've still got a long way to go to restore the sense of security that too many middle class families are still fighting to rebuild. But if we keep moving forward with our eyes fixed on that north star of a growing middle class, then I'm confident we'll get to where we need to go.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on July 19 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 20.

Statement on the Death of Helen A. Thomas

July 20, 2013

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Helen Thomas. Helen was a true pioneer, opening doors and breaking down barriers for generations of women in journalism. She covered every White House since President Kennedy's, and during that time, she never failed to keep Presidents—myself included—on

their toes. What made Helen the Dean of the White House Press Corps was not just the length of her tenure, but her fierce belief that our democracy works best when we ask tough questions and hold our leaders to account. Our thoughts are with Helen's family, her friends, and the colleagues who respected her so deeply.

Statement Congratulating Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, of the United Kingdom on the Birth of Their Son

July 22, 2013

Michelle and I are so pleased to congratulate the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the joyous occasion of the birth of their first child. We wish them all the happiness and blessings parenthood brings. The child enters the world at a time of promise and opportunity for our two nations. Given the special relation-

ship between us, the American people are pleased to join with the people of the United Kingdom as they celebrate the birth of the young Prince.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prince George Alexander Louis.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Event

July 22, 2013

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, OFA! Thank you. All right, everybody, sit down, sit down. Thank you. You get me embarrassed. [Laughter] It is good to see all of you. I miss all you guys. I miss you. I missed you.

First of all, can everybody please give Bill a big round of applause for the great introduction and the great work he's doing. So proud of him.

I want to thank our outstanding partners: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, for being

here, and our outstanding Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, for being here.

But mainly, I just wanted to see all you guys—[laughter]—and say hey.

Audience members. Hey!

The President. Michelle says hey.

Audience members. Hey!

The President. The girls, they went out to camp. [Laughter] We're a little lonely at home