

I am pleased that Ambassador Martin Indyk will lead the U.S. negotiating team as U.S. Special Envoy for Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations. Ambassador Indyk brings unique experience and insight to this role, which will allow him to contribute immediately as the parties

begin down the tough, but necessary, path of negotiations.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Lebanon

July 29, 2013

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

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007, is to continue in effect beyond August 1, 2013.

Certain ongoing activities, such as continuing arms transfers to Hizballah that include in-

creasingly sophisticated weapons systems, undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon.

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 notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks at the Amazon Chattanooga Fulfillment Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee

July 30, 2013

Hello, Chattanooga! Hey! Well, it is good to be back in Tennessee. It's great to be here at Amazon.

I want to thank Lydia for the introduction and sharing her story. Give Lydia a big round of applause. So this is something here. I just finished getting a tour of just one little corner of this massive facility, size of 28 football fields. Last year, during the busiest day of the Christmas rush, customers around the world ordered more than 300 items from Amazon every second, and a lot of those traveled through this building. So this is kind of like the North Pole

of the South right here. Got a bunch of good-looking elves here.

Now, before we start, I want to recognize your general manager, Mike Thomas; my tour guide and your vice president, Dave Clark; you've got the mayor of Chattanooga, Andy Berke; and you've got one of the finest gentlemen I know, your Congressman, Jim Cooper. So thank you all for being here.

So I've come here today to talk a little more about something I was discussing last week, and that's what we need to do as a country to secure a better bargain for the middle class: a

national strategy to make sure that every single person who's willing to work hard in this country has a chance to succeed in the 21st-century economy.

Now, you heard from Lydia, so you know—because many of you went through it—over the past 4½ years, we've been fighting our way back from the worst recession since the Great Depression, and it cost millions of Americans their jobs and their homes and their savings. And part of what it did was, it laid bare the long-term erosion that's been happening when it comes to middle class security.

But because the American people are resilient, we bounced back. Together, we've righted the ship. We took on a broken health care system. We invested in new American technologies to reverse our addiction to foreign oil, changed a Tax Code that had become tilted too much in favor of the wealthy at the expense of working families, saved an auto industry. And thanks to GM and the UAW working together, we're bringing jobs back here to America, including 1,800 autoworkers in Spring Hills; 1,800 workers in Spring Hills are on the job today where a plant was once closed.

Today, our businesses have created 7.2 million new jobs over the last 40 months. This year, we're off to our best private sector jobs growth since 1999. We now sell more products made in America to the rest of the world than ever before. We produce more renewable energy than ever before; we produce more natural gas than anybody else in the world. Health care costs are growing at the slowest rate in 50 years. Our deficits are falling at the fastest rate in 60 years.

So thanks to hard-working folks like you, thanks to the grit and resilience of the American people, we've been able to clear away some of the rubble from the financial crisis. We've started to lay a new foundation for a stronger, more durable America, the kind of economic growth that's broad based, the foundation required to make this century another American century.

But as I said last week, and as any middle class family will tell you: We're not there yet. Even before the financial crisis hit, we were

going through a decade where a few at the top were doing better and better, but most families were working harder and harder just to get by. And reversing that trend should be Washington's highest priority. It's my highest priority.

But so far, for most of this year, we've seen an endless parade of distractions and political posturing and phony scandals. And we keep on shifting our way—shifting our attention away from what we should be focused on, which is, how do we strengthen the middle class and grow the economy for everybody? And as Washington heads towards yet another budget debate, the stakes couldn't be higher.

And that's why I'm visiting cities and towns like this one, to lay out my ideas for how we can build on the cornerstone of what it means to be middle class in America: a good job with good wages, a good education; a home to call your own; affordable health care that's there for you when you get sick; a secure retirement even if you're not rich; more chances for folks to earn their way into the middle class as long as they're willing to work for it; and most importantly, the chance to pass on a better future for our kids.

So I'm doing a series of speeches over the next several weeks, but I came to Chattanooga today to talk about the first and most important cornerstone of middle class security, and that's a good job in a durable, growing industry.

It's hard to get the other stuff going if you don't have a good job. And the truth is, everything I'm going to be talking about over the next several weeks really is about jobs. Because preparing our children and our workers for the global competition they'll face, that's about jobs. A housing finance system that makes it easier and safer to buy and build new homes, that's about jobs in the construction industry. Health care that frees you from the fear of losing everything after you've worked so hard and then having the freedom to maybe start your own business because you know you'll be able to get health care, that's about jobs. And obviously, retirement benefits speak to the quality of our jobs.

And let me say this, something everybody here understands: Jobs are about more than

just paying the bills. Jobs are about more than just statistics. We've never just defined having a job as having a paycheck here in America. A job is a source of pride; it's a source of dignity. It's the way you look after your family. It's proof that you're doing the right things and meeting your responsibilities and contributing to the fabric of your community and helping to build the country. That's what a job is all about. It's not just about a paycheck. It's not just about paying the bills. It's also about knowing that what you're doing is important, that it counts.

So we should be doing everything we can as a country to create more good jobs that pay good wages. Period.

Now, here's the thing, Chattanooga, the problem is not that we don't have ideas about how we could create even more jobs. We've got a lot of ideas out there. There are plenty of independent economists, plenty of business owners, people from both parties, agree on some of the ingredients that we need for creating good jobs. And you've heard them debated again and again over these past few years. I've proposed a lot of these ideas myself. Just 2 years ago, I announced the "American Jobs Act," full of ideas that every independent economist said would create more jobs. Some were passed by Congress. But I've got to admit, most of them weren't.

Sometimes, there were ideas that historically had Republican support, and for some reason, suddenly, Republicans didn't want to support them anymore: putting people back to work rebuilding America's infrastructure; equipping our kids and our workers with the best skills; leading the world in scientific research that helps to pave the way for new jobs in new industries; accelerating our clean energy and natural gas revolutions; fixing a broken immigration system so that American workers aren't undercut, undermined because some businesses are unscrupulous and hiring folks and not paying them decent wages.

Independent economists say immigration reform would boost our economy by more than a trillion dollars. So we've got ideas out there we know can work. And if we don't make these

investments, if we don't make these reforms, then we might as well be waving the white flag to the rest of the world, because they're moving forward. They're not slowing down. China, Germany, India, they're going. And we can't just sit by and do nothing. Doing nothing doesn't help the middle class.

So today I came here to offer a framework that might help break through some of the political logjam in Washington and try to get Congress to start moving on some of these proven ideas. But let me briefly outline some of the areas I think we need to focus on if we want to create good jobs, with good wages, in durable industries, areas that will fuel our future growth.

Number one, jobs in American manufacturing. Over the past 4 years, for the first time since the 1990s, the number of manufacturing jobs in America hasn't gone down, it's actually gone up. So the trend lines are good; now we've got to build on that progress. I want to offer new incentives for manufacturers not to ship jobs overseas, but to bring them back here to America. I want new tax credits so communities hit hardest by plant closures can attract new investment.

In my State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to build on a successful pilot program we've set up. We want to create not just 15 manufacturing innovation institutes that connect businesses and universities and Federal agencies to help communities left behind by global competition to become centers of high-tech jobs, today I'm asking Congress to build on this bipartisan support and triple that number from 15 to 45: these hubs, where we're getting businesses, universities, communities all to work together to develop centers of high-tech industries all throughout the United States that allow us to be at the forefront of the next revolution of manufacturing, I want it made here in the United States of America. I don't want that happening overseas.

Number two—I talked about this last week—jobs rebuilding our infrastructure. I look at this amazing facility, and you guys, you don't miss a beat. I mean, you've got these packages coming out. You've got dog food and

Kindles and beard trimmers and—[laughter]. I mean, there's all kinds of stuff around here. But once it's packed up, it's got to get to the customer. And how quickly and how dependably it gets to the customer depends on, do we have good roads? Do we have good bridges? Do we have state-of-the-art airports?

We've got about \$2 trillion of deferred maintenance here in this country. So let's put more construction workers back on the job doing the work America needs done. These are vital projects that Amazon needs, businesses all across the country need, like widening Route 27 here in Chattanooga, deepening the Jacksonville Port that I visited last week. These are projects vital to our national pride.

We're going to be breaking ground this week at the St. Louis Arch. Congress should pass what I've called my Fix-It-First plan to put people to work immediately on our most urgent repairs, like the 100,000 bridges that are old enough to qualify for Medicare. That will create good middle class jobs right now. [Applause] Right now. And we should partner with the private sector to upgrade what businesses like Amazon need most. We should have a modern air traffic control system to keep planes running on time. We should have modern power grids and pipelines to survive a storm. We should have modern schools to prepare our kids for the jobs of tomorrow.

Number three, we need to keep creating good jobs in energy: in wind and solar and natural gas. Those new energy sources are reducing energy costs. They're reducing dangerous carbon pollution. They're reducing our dependence on foreign oil. So now is not the time to gut investments in American technology. Now is the time to double down on renewable energy and biofuels and electric vehicles and to put money into the research that will shift our cars and trucks off oil for good.

And let me tell you, cheaper costs of natural gas is a huge boost to our businesses here in America, so we should develop it even more. We've got to do it in a way that protects our air and our water for our children and future generations, but we can do that. We've got the technology to do it.

Number four, we've got to export more. We want to send American goods all around the world. A year ago, I signed a new trade agreement with Korea, because they were selling a lot of Hyundais here, but we weren't selling a lot of GM cars over there. Since we signed that deal, our Big Three automakers are selling 18 percent more cars in Korea than they were.

So now we've got to help more of our businesses do the same thing. I'm asking Congress for the authority to negotiate the best trade deals possible for our workers and combine it with robust training and assistance measures to make sure our workers have the support and the skills they need for this new global competition. And we're going to have to sharpen our competitive edge in the global job marketplace.

Two years ago, we created something called SelectUSA. This is a coordinated effort to attract foreign companies looking to invest and create jobs here in the United States. And today I'm directing my Cabinet to expand these efforts. And this October, I'm going to bring business leaders from around the world, and I'm going to connect them to State leaders and local leaders like your mayor who are ready to prove there's no better place to do business than right here in the United States of America.

Number five, let's help more than—let's do more to help the more than 4 million long-term unemployed Americans that are out there. One of the problems that happens is, a lot of folks, they lose their jobs during this really bad recession through no fault of their own. They've got what it takes to fill that job opening, but because they've been out of work so long employers won't even give their application a fair look.

So I'm challenging CEOs to do more to get these Americans back on their feet. And I'm going to bring together the CEOs and companies that are putting in place some of the best practices for recruiting and training and hiring workers who have been out of work for a long time, but want the chance to show that they're ready to go back to work.

And at the same time, I'm calling on our businesses to do more for their workers.

Amazon is a great example of what's possible. What you're doing here at Amazon with your Career Choice Program pays 95 percent of the tuition for employees who want to earn skills in fields with high demand, not just, by the way, jobs here at Amazon, but jobs anywhere: computer-aided design or nursing. I talked to Jeff Bezos yesterday, and he was so proud of the fact that he wants to see every employee at Amazon continually upgrade their skills and improve. And if they've got a dream they want to pursue, Amazon wants to help them pursue it.

That's the kind of approach that we need from America's businesses. Offering training programs, health care, retirement plans, paying better wages—that's not just the right thing to do, it's actually good for your bottom line. A recent study shows that when a company makes the list of the 100 best companies to work for in America, its share price outperforms its competitors, because the stock market and investors, they know if a company has employees that are motivated and happy, that business is more likely to succeed. [*Applause*] That business is more likely to succeed.

And because nobody who works full-time in America should have to live in poverty, I'm going to keep on making the case and fighting for the fact that we need to raise our minimum wage, because right now it's in lower terms than it was when Ronald Reagan took office. When folks have more money in their pockets, that's good for Amazon; it means your customers have a little more money. They can order a little more of that protein powder. [*Laughter*] I noticed a lot of folks were ordering protein powder. Everybody is trying to get bulked up. [*Laughter*]

So here's—those are some of the ideas that we're out there, we're promoting. We're not lacking for ideas, we're just lacking action, especially out of Washington.

For most of the past 2 years, Washington has just taken its eye off the ball when it comes to the middle class. And I'll tell you, look, there are a growing number of—the good news is, there are a growing number of Republican Senators who are trying to work with Democrats to get some stuff done. That's good news.

The bad news is that rather than keep our focus on what should be our priority—which is growing our economy and creating good middle class jobs—we've seen a certain faction of Republicans in Congress hurt a fragile recovery by saying that they wouldn't pay the very bills that Congress racked up in the first place, threatening to shut down the people's Government if they can't get rid of Obamacare. Instead of reducing our deficits with a scalpel to get rid of programs we don't need, but keep vital investments that we do, this same group has kept in place this meat cleaver called the sequester that is just slashing all kinds of important investments in education and research and our military. All the things that are needed to make this country a magnet for good middle class jobs, those things are being cut.

And these moves don't just hurt our economy in the long term, they hurt our middle class right now. The independent Congressional Budget Office estimates that the cuts that are being made right now in Washington will cost our economy 750,000 jobs this year, 900,000 fewer jobs next year. And a lot of the jobs at risk are at small businesses that contract with our military or our Federal agencies.

Over the past 4 years, another 700,000 workers at the Federal, State, and local levels of government have lost their jobs. These are cops and firefighters, and about half of them are people who work in our schools. Those are real jobs. It doesn't help a company like Amazon when a teacher or a cop or a firefighter loses their job. They don't have money to place an order. That's hundreds of thousands of customers who have less money to spend.

If those layoffs had not happened, if public sector employees grew like they did in the past two recessions, the unemployment rate would be 6.5 instead of 7.5. Our economy would be much better off, and the deficit would still be going down because we'd be getting more tax revenue.

So the point is, if Washington spent as much time and energy these past 2 years figuring out how to grow our economy and grow our middle class as it's spent manufacturing crises in pursuit of a cut-at-all-costs approach to defi-

cits, we'd be much better off. [Applause] We'd be much better off.

And it's not like we don't have to cut our deficits. As a share of the economy, we've cut our deficits by nearly half since I took office—half. And they're projected to go down even further, but there's a right way to do it and a wrong way to do it. And we should do it in a way that actually helps middle class families instead of hurts them.

I've told Republicans that if they're serious about a balanced, long-term fiscal plan that replaces harmful budget cuts, that would get serious about a long-term plan that prevents those 900,000 jobs from being lost, that helps grow the economy, that helps the middle class—I am ready to go. But we can't lose sight of our north star. We can't allow an impasse over long-term fiscal challenges to distract us from what the middle class needs right now.

So here's the bottom line: If folks in Washington really want a grand bargain, how about a grand bargain for middle class jobs? [Applause] How about a grand bargain for middle class jobs?

I don't want to go through the same old arguments where I propose an idea and the Republicans just say no because it's my idea. So I'm going to try offering something that serious people in both parties should be able to support: a deal that simplifies the Tax Code for our businesses and creates good jobs with good wages for middle class folks who work at those businesses.

Right now—everybody knows this—our Tax Code is so riddled with loopholes and special interest tax breaks that a lot of companies who are doing the right thing and investing in America pay 35 percent in their taxes; corporations who have got fancy accountants and stash their money overseas, they pay little or nothing in taxes. That's not fair, and it's not good for the economy here.

So I'm willing to simplify our Tax Code: closes those loopholes, ends incentives to ship jobs overseas, lowers the rate for businesses that are creating jobs right here in America, provides tax incentives for manufacturers that bring jobs home to the United States. Let's

simplify taxes for small-business owners, give them incentives to invest so they can spend less time filling out complicated forms, more time expanding and hiring.

I'm willing to do all that; that should help businesses and help them grow. But if we're going to give businesses a better deal, then we're also going to have to give workers a better deal too. I want to use some of the money that we save by closing these loopholes to create more good construction jobs with infrastructure initiatives that I already talked about. We can build a broader network of high-tech manufacturing hubs that leaders from both parties can support. We can help our community colleges arm our workers with the skills that a global economy demands. All these things would benefit the middle class right now and benefit our economy in the years to come.

So again, here's the bottom line: I'm willing to work with Republicans on reforming our corporate Tax Code, as long as we use the money from transitioning to a simpler tax system for a significant investment in creating middle class jobs. That's the deal.

And I'm just going to keep on throwing ideas out there to see if something takes. [Laughter] I'm going to lay out my ideas to give the middle class a better shot. But now it's time for Republicans to lay out their ideas.

If they've got a better plan to bring back more manufacturing jobs here to Tennessee and around the country, then let them know—let me know. I want to hear them. If they've got a better plan to create jobs rebuilding our infrastructure or to help workers earn the high-tech skills that they need, then they should offer up these ideas.

But I've got to tell you, just gutting our environmental protection, that's not a jobs plan. Gutting investments in education, that's not a jobs plan. They keep on talking about this—an oil pipeline coming down from Canada that's estimated to create about 50 permanent jobs; that's not a jobs plan. Wasting the country's time by taking something like 40 meaningless votes to repeal Obamacare is not a jobs plan. [Applause] That's not a jobs plan.

So let's get serious. They're—look, I want to tell everybody here the truth. And you know, look, I know that the politics for Obama aren't always great in Tennessee. I understand that. But I want everybody to just hear the honest truth. I've run my last campaign, so I don't need to spin.

And here's the truth: There are no gimmicks that create jobs. There are no simple tricks to grow the economy. Growing the economy, making sure that the middle class is strong, it's like getting in shape. You can't just go on the muffin and doughnut diet and the latest fad and lose weight. You've got to work out, and you've got to eat better. Right? Well, the same is true for our economy. The same is true for helping the middle class.

We've got to have a serious, steady, long-term American strategy to reverse the long-term erosion of middle class security and give everybody a fair shot. And we know what we have to do. It involves education. It involves infrastructure. It involves research. It involves good energy policy. And we just have to stay at it. More good jobs that pay decent wages, a better bargain for the middle class, an economy that grows from the middle out—that's got to be our focus.

## Statement on Senate Confirmation of Nancy J. Schiffer, Kent Y. Hirozawa, Mark G. Pearce, Harry I. Johnson III, and Philip A. Miscimarra as Members of the National Labor Relations Board *July 30, 2013*

I welcome today's confirmation of Nancy Schiffer, Kent Hirozawa, Mark Pearce, Harry Johnson III, and Philip Miscimarra to the National Labor Relations Board. A critical part of our effort to strengthen the middle class is ensuring that every American who works hard has a chance to succeed. That means providing wages people can live on, safe working conditions, and

We can't be getting into a whole bunch of fads and pretend like you roll back Obamacare and suddenly, all these jobs are going to be created, because the middle class was struggling before I came into office. The middle class was losing ground before I came into office. Jobs were getting shipped overseas before Obamacare was in place. So we've got to be honest. We've got to be honest about the challenges we face, but also the opportunities that are out there.

And that's what I'm going to be focused on not just for the next few months. I'm going to be focused for every one of the 1,270 days I've got left in my Presidency on how to make sure that we've got more opportunity and more security for everybody who is willing to work hard in this country. That's where I believe America needs to go. And we can do it if we work together, Chattanooga. Let's get to work.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lydia Flanders, employee, Amazon Chattanooga Fulfillment Center; and Dave Clark, vice president of worldwide operations and customer service, and Jeffrey P. Bezos, president, chief executive officer, and chairman of the board, Amazon.com, Inc.

real opportunities to get ahead. Every day, the NLRB is focused on the concerns of working Americans, from eliminating unfair labor practices to upholding the right of employees to join a union and bargain collectively with their employers. I applaud the Senate for putting in place a full Board and look forward to working together on other steps we can take to grow our economy.