

aquifers that have been so important to the economy of this State for decades. If we were able to do that then, we should be able to do it now. It's just a matter of us making sure that we're not putting politics ahead of trying to get things working.

Our work with Governor Brown and his administration is going to continue. Californians have all had to come together and already make sacrifices, big and small, to help your neighbors and your State get through this. The good news is, California is always on the cutting edge. Already, you use water far more efficiently than you did decades ago. You do it smarter. Joe was explaining just how this drip irrigation that you see in this region has made many of these farms much more efficient when it comes to water utilization. And so we know that we can innovate and meet this challenge, but we've got to start now. We can't wait.

So I want to make sure that every Californian knows—whether you're NorCals, SoCal, here in the Central Valley—your country is going to be there for you when you need it this year. But we're going to have to all work together in the years to come to make sure that we address the challenge and leave this incredible land embodied to our children and our

grandchildren in at least as good shape as we found it.

So thank you very much, everybody, for the great work that you guys do. And I've already told the Governor as well as all your outstanding representatives here that our administration is going to stay on this and we are prepared to cooperate with local, State officials throughout. And that's not just in California, because we're going to see some similar problems in places like Colorado, Nevada, some of the neighboring Western States, and so part of the conversation is also going to have to be a regional conversation.

But this is something that I'm very committed to. We're going to make sure to get it done, working together. Thank you so much, everybody.

Audience members. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. at Del Bosque Farms, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Joe L. Del Bosque, Jr., president, and Maria G. Del Bosque, vice president, Del Bosque Farms, Inc.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With King Abdullah II of Jordan in Rancho Mirage, California February 14, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome my good friend and partner, King Abdullah, back to the United States. And it's wonderful to be able to host him here at beautiful Sunnylands. I want to thank the Annenberg group that has maintained this wonderful facility and made it available to us.

This gives me an opportunity to have an extensive consultation with His Majesty in a less formal setting. But I think it's fair to say that we have very few friends, partners, and allies around the world that have been as steadfast and reliable as His Majesty King Abdullah, as well as the people of Jordan. In a region that obviously is going through enormous changes,

the friendship between our peoples has been a constant.

And most recently, we are now partnering because Jordan just took its seat on the Security Council and is working actively with us on a whole range of international issues. I'm going to be very interested in hearing more from His Majesty about the reforms that he has initiated both politically and economically, because his top priority obviously is the prosperity of his people and providing more opportunity for the population there.

We've been very impressed with the fact that, although oftentimes difficult and although it meets resistance sometimes, His

Majesty has been able to move forward with the reforms that meet the IMF program that has been put together. And in part because of these successes, I want to announce today that we will be providing the Kingdom of Jordan a \$1 billion loan guarantee fund that will help Jordan access the international capital markets, as well as extend for 5 years the memorandum of understanding that we have with the Kingdom of Jordan that allows that country to pursue the kind of development that will not only help the people of Jordan, but help the region as a whole.

Our cooperation on a whole host of issues is extensive. We're going to be talking a lot about the political changes that are taking place in the region. Obviously, a central focus will be the situation in Syria. And the people of Jordan have been very generous in absorbing hundreds of thousands of displaced persons from that war-ravaged country. It puts a great strain on the resources of Jordan, and it's very important for us to make sure that we're supportive of the Kingdom in accommodating all these refugees.

At the same time, both of us recognize that we can't just treat the symptoms. We'll be working aggressively at the United Nations level and at the regional level to try to provide basic humanitarian assistance and access to people who are suffering tremendously as a consequence of the war inside of Syria. But we're also going to have to solve the underlying problem: a regime led by Bashar al-Asad that has shown very little regard for the well-being of his people, has attacked civilians in ruthless ways. We are going to need a political transition in that region.

And we're going to continue to strategize on how we can effectively change the calculus inside the country so that we can have a Syria that is intact, that is respectful of all groups, that ends the killing, and that allows for a representative government that can provide peace and prosperity for everybody there.

We don't expect to solve this any time in the short term, so there are going to be some immediate steps that we have to take to help the humanitarian situation there. There will be

some intermediate steps that we can take to apply more pressure to the Asad regime, and we're going to be continuing to work with all the parties concerned to try to move forward on a diplomatic solution.

But in all these issues, and in the critical issue of trying to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians—an issue that His Majesty, and his father before him, had enormous stake in and investment in and has been a very capable and trustworthy partner—on all these issues, we are very grateful for the work that we're able to do together. And I look forward to what I'm sure is going to be an illuminating and constructive conversation.

So thank you, Your Majesty. And welcome.

King Abdullah. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted and pleased on behalf of myself and the Jordanian people. I'm really, really appreciative of the time that you're giving us today. And on behalf of all of us, thank you for the support of yourself, of your administration, of the American people, of Congress, with the outstanding support that you've shown Jordan with all the changes that we're facing. With all of the challenges that are ahead of us, I will continue our comprehensive reform program. We're not using the challenges in our region as an excuse to waver, and I'm looking forward to discussing our reform process with you this evening.

As you mentioned, we are going to be the members of the U.N. Security Council for the next 2 years. There are many challenges in our region and beyond, and I look forward to working with the United States and the international community on how we can best bring peace and prosperity not only to the region, but beyond.

Sir, obviously, we'd like to commend the role that the United States has been playing in bringing Israelis and Palestinians closer together. And obviously, your role—the leadership that the United States has shown—has been critical and very much admired. And the diligence of the way that the United States has been able to bring both partners much closer together over the past several months has really given me a lot of hope. And so I would just

like to commend the dramatic role of the United States in that regard.

As you're very well aware, we're obviously a stakeholder in all final status negotiations, and therefore, our national interests in these issues are of paramount importance. But I am cautiously optimistic, even with the major challenges, that America has been really working tirelessly to really improve the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Obviously, as you mentioned, sir, the main challenge that we have is, how do we bring a political, comprehensive solution to the Syrian people? Our major concern in the area is the rise of extremism in Syria, the sectarian violence, and if we don't find a solution, the spill-over in the region and the effect that will have. But again, I'm sure that our views are similar, and we will be working very closely with you, sir, and our Western friends in trying to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people as quickly as possible.

Sir, you've mentioned your very generous support by yourself and the American people of the challenges that Jordan faces. Jordan is a resilient country. We see ourselves as an oasis of stability to our neighbors. And you have

mentioned that the challenges that we face with the immense pressure of Syrian refugees and what it does to the host nation from a humanitarian point of view. And the United States has been beyond the call of duty in its support for us. And I just wanted to mention, again in front of you, how grateful I am and the people of Jordan for that outstanding support.

We do hope that the rest of the international community also steps up and catches up in the support not only for the Syrian refugees, but also the impact it has on Jordanians and Jordanian infrastructure, as well as looking at mechanisms of how we can push humanitarian supplies into Syria.

So we have a lot to talk about, sir, today, but I am very grateful on behalf of all of us for this time that you're giving us and the tremendous support that you've shown our people. Thank you.

President Obama. All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

The President's Weekly Address *February 15, 2014*

Hi, everybody. In this year of action, I said I'd do everything in my power to expand opportunity for more Americans. And this week, I took action to lift more workers' wages by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least \$10.10 an hour. These are workers who serve our troops' meals, wash their dishes, care for our veterans, Americans who work hard and will get a raise as these contracts come up. This will be good for contractors, for taxpayers, and for America's bottom line.

We know why this is important. Our economy has been growing for 4 years. Our businesses have created 8½ million new jobs. But while those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to

get by, let alone get ahead. And that's been true since long before the recession hit.

That's why we've got to build an economy that works for everybody, not just a fortunate few. We've got to restore opportunity for all, the notion that no matter who you are or how you started out, with hard work and responsibility, you can get ahead in America.

The opportunity agenda I've laid out is built on more new jobs that pay good wages, better training for folks to fill those jobs, a smarter education for our kids, and making sure honest work is rewarded. And the action I took this week will reward hard work for more Americans.

But to finish the job, Congress needs to act. In the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have passed laws