

Union—is that we need all hands on deck to build on the recovery that we’re already seeing. The economy is improving, but it could be improving even faster. A lot of people are doing better than they were in the depths of the recession, but there are still a lot of folks who need help. And I am absolutely confident that in 2014, if we’re all working in the same direction and not worrying so much about political points, but worrying much more about getting the job done, that we can see a lot of improvement this year, and people will look back on 2014 as a year in which we didn’t just turn the corner in the aggregate for the economy, but everybody started feeling a little more optimistic about our futures.

So I’m looking forward to the discussion. And with that, I’m going to kick you all out. [Laughter]

Review of U.S. Signals Intelligence and Electronic Surveillance Programs

Q. How do you think the NSA is going to affect your year this year? And how will you address it on Friday?

The President. Thank you, guys.

Q. Have you finished your review on the NSA?

The President. Actually, it’s getting close. So I’ll have quite a bit to say about that very soon.

Q. How will that affect your year this year?

The President. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2013 National Basketball Association Champion Miami Heat

January 14, 2014

The President. Hello! Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Welcome to the White House. Actually, for these guys, it is welcome back to the White House, after being back-to-back world champions, the Miami Heat.

[At this point, an audience member hollered.]

[Laughter] Now, one of the cool things about this job is welcoming championship sports teams from across the sporting world to the White House. And usually, people enjoy coming to the White House. I have to say, I’ve never seen folks more excited than the Heat when they came last year. [Laughter] I mean, LeBron was so pumped up I thought he was going to give me a hug and knock me over, like the guy in “SportsCenter” who hit the half-court shot. But it was wonderful to see them then. It wonderful to see them back.

We’ve got some outstanding Members of Congress who are big fans of the Heat. They’re from both parties, because we all know nothing brings people together like the Miami Heat. [Laughter] It’s a—across the NBA there’s just a unifying—[laughter]—sense about the Heat.

I want to congratulate Coach Spoelstra for the outstanding work that he does; legendary team president, Pat Riley, for his outstanding leadership; and all the coaches and players, members of the staff and crew to make a championship season. This group has now won twice, but it’s gone to the finals three times. And sometimes, it feels like they’re still fighting for a little respect. I can relate to that. [Laughter]

Last season, the Heat put together one of the most dominating regular seasons ever by a defending champion. They won a team record 66 games. At what point, they won 27 games straight, the second longest winning streak ever, extraordinarily impressive, almost as impressive as the Bulls’ 72-win season. [Laughter] Riley and I were reminiscing about those Knicks years. [Laughter]

But as these guys know, winning a title is never easy. In the playoffs, the Pacers put them through seven bruising games. In the finals, the Spurs showed us all that they’ve got an awful lot of life left in them and one of the greatest players of all time and one of the greatest coaches of all time. In fact, San Anto-

nio had the series all but wrapped up in game six. As you will recall, Miami was down five points, less than 30 seconds to go. The last 122 times that happened in the playoffs, the team that was down lost 122 times.

And then they brought out the ropes. And then Ray Allen saw them bring out the ropes. [Laughter] And with 5 seconds left, Chris Bosh gets an incredible offensive rebound, passes it out to Ray; Ray is backing up, he's got to jump forward; hits one of the most iconic shots of all time. And then he added a few choice words about the ropes, which we cannot—[laughter]—which we cannot repeat here. But, Ray, I do want you to know that when you say those things on the court, like, people can read your lips, right? [Laughter] You do understand that?

Guard Ray Allen. Yes.

The President. Okay. All right.

So the Heat won game six, went on to win game seven, their third title in eight seasons. LeBron James earned his second straight Finals MVP to go along with four regular season MVPs in 5 years. Dwyane Wade, warrior that he is, played through a pair of injured knees, always came through when it mattered. Chris Bosh was there playing great defense, getting the rebound, hitting a clutch shot. Everybody on this team participated.

And from Ray's big shot to the contributions of Mario Chalmers, Shane Battier, Udonis Haslem, Birdman, Birdman's tattoos—[laughter]—Birdman's mohawk—[laughter]—the Heat showed us the kind of heart and determination it takes to be a champion.

And they also showed what it—what heart means off the court. Last year, they raised close to \$2 million for local charities. Before this event, they met with some of our amazing wounded warriors over at Walter Reed, and we're proud to have some of those wounded warriors here in the audience here today. Honoring our troops isn't just something that they do when they come to the White House, it's something they do all year round with their Heat Home Strong initiative. And Pat Riley, I know, has been hugely invested in this, and we talked a little bit about this. His incredible admiration for our men and women in uniform,

but more concretely, his willingness to do something about how we support them, I think, is a credit to the entire organization.

On top of that, Coach Spoelstra serves as a member of the NBA Fit team to encourage healthy habits among young people. I know Michelle is thankful for the support that many of these players have given to her "Let's Move!" initiative. I heard that all of you are getting ready to embarrass yourselves by singing some karaoke for Shane's education foundation. [Laughter] Just leave Al Green to the pros, people. [Laughter]

So bottom line is, outstanding athletes, outstanding organization, outstanding team, but also outstanding members of their community. And so we're very proud to have them back. We wish them great luck for the rest of the season, unless they're playing the Bulls. [Laughter]

And with that, I think we should take a picture, but we should make it quick before one of these guys starts yelling at Mario. [Laughter] All right. I mean, sometimes, it's just a bad pass, guys. It's not Mario's fault. [Laughter] Now, but—I've got your back, man.

Head Coach Erik Spoelstra. Well, this is a great honor for the entire Miami Heat family. It does not get old. Okay? And what this is, is we put this together before the playoff run last year, and it was a covenant between all of us that we signed, that we would commit to each other, all the way to the end. So—

The President. This is outstanding.

Coach Spoelstra. So we have marks for each win, and it signified each player would mark the win for that game, and the final one was the team one. So this one, right here, you can see "44" and your name right there.

The President. There you go. It was added to it. You know, you guys are winning me over a little bit. [Laughter]

Coach Spoelstra. Getting there. Getting there.

The President. I mean—

Coach Spoelstra. We promise we'll put together another one for you and let you mark it this year. [Laughter] Okay?

The President. Congratulations. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to LeBron James, Shane Battier, and Udonis Haslem, forwards, Chris Bosh and

Chris “Birdman” Andersen, center-forwards, and Dwyane Wade and Mario Chalmers, guards, Miami Heat; Patrick J. Riley, president, the HEAT Group; and musician Al Green.

Statement on Representative William L. Owens’s Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 14, 2014

During his time in the United States Congress, Bill Owens has been a forceful advocate for the people of New York. Bill has helped create jobs and economic opportunity for hard-working North Country families and farmers. And as a proud veteran of the U.S. Air Force,

he has protected the interests of our men and women in uniform. Michelle and I thank Congressman Owens for his service, and we wish him, his wife Jane, and their three children the very best in the future.

Remarks at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina

January 15, 2014

The President. Hello, Raleigh! Thank you so much. Thank you. Well, it is good to be back in North Carolina. If you have a seat, go ahead and have a seat. Now, if you don’t have a seat, don’t. [Laughter]

It is good to be here at the home of the Wolfpack. I want to thank your chancellor, Randy Woodson, for the introduction and the great work that he’s doing on behalf of students all across the system. I want to recognize my Secretary of Energy, Ernie Moniz, who is here. Give him a big round of applause; he’s doing good work. Your Governor, Pat McCrory, is here. The mayor of Raleigh, Nancy McFarlane. The mayor of Chapel Hill, Mark Kleinschmidt. The mayor of Durham, Bill Bell. And we’ve got Congressman Mike McIntyre doing great work. Your Senator, Kay Hagan, couldn’t be here, but I wanted to thank her publicly for the great work she’s doing.

And I want to thank all the students for coming out. We’re doing this event nice and early so it doesn’t run up against the Wake game. I’ve learned a few things as President, and one of them is not to compete with college basketball down here on Tobacco Road. You don’t do that.

Now, this is actually my second stop in Raleigh-Durham. I just took a tour of a company called

Vacon, where workers design the drives that power everything from elevators to the giant fans that help cool buildings like this one, although I think we’re kind of saving money on this one—[laughter]—which is the smart thing to do.

So this company is making these engines and these systems more efficient, saving businesses big bucks on energy costs, improving the environment. Those savings get passed on to customers, puts money in people’s pockets. And growing companies that need the products that Vacon makes, they’re benefiting enormously. So it’s a good-news story. But in a global economy, that company, just like every company in America, has to keep inventing and innovating in order to stay on the cutting edge. And that’s where all of you come in.

Here at NC State, you know something about innovation. You’ve got one of the largest undergraduate engineering programs in the country. That’s worth cheering for. I’m a lawyer by training, and that’s nice. But we need more engineers.

So companies like Cisco and IBM, they come to this school when they’re looking to hire because of the quality of the engineering program. And over at Centennial Campus, some very smart people experiment in state-of-