

deepen that coordination in terms of both diplomacy and military cooperation. And that includes joint exercises and on missile defense.

So again, I want to thank President Park and Prime Minister Abe for being here after a long summit. I appreciate their delegations being here as well. I think it's very important for our three nations to display this kind of unity and shared determination. It's an important message to our citizens; it's an important message to the Asia-Pacific region. And this also gives me an opportunity to lay the groundwork for even more productive meetings when I visit both the Republic of Korea and Japan in April.

So thank you again, Madam Prime Minister—or Madam President and Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you very much. Thank you.

President Park. Given the increasingly uncertain developments in North Korea, the critical need for closer coordination among the three countries with regard to North Korea, the North Korean nuclear issue, the chance to engage in an exchange of views with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe is very significant. The North Korean nuclear issue poses a major threat to peace and stability in the region, and it is vital that the international community, including Korea, the U.S., and Japan, fashion a united response.

The fact that the leaders of the three countries have gathered together and they're discussing the issue of the North Korean nuclear weapons issue is in and of itself very significant. Should North Korea embark on the path to denuclearization on the basis of sincerity, then there will be a way forward to address the

difficulties confronting the North Korean people.

The United States has worked very hard to make today's meeting happen. I sincerely hope that this meeting will offer a chance for us to reaffirm our trilateral coordination and strengthen cooperation on the nuclear front.

Prime Minister Abe. I am so delighted that we are able to hold the Japan-U.S.-Republic of Korea trilateral summit today. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to President Obama for hosting this summit. And I am so very happy to be able to see President Park Geun-hye.

It is highly meaningful and also timely that the leaders of the three countries sharing basic values and strategic interests are gathering together to have extensive discussions of security. Particularly, it is extremely important to be able to confirm close cooperation amongst Japan, United States, and the Republic of Korea on the issue of North Korea. And the three countries would like to cooperate so that the North Korea would be able to take a positive stance with regard to nuclear and missile issue and the abduction issue and also humanitarian issues such as the separated families of the Republic of Korea.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. President Park spoke in Korean, and Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by interpreters.

Remarks With King Philippe and Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo of Belgium at Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial in Waregem, Belgium

March 26, 2014

King Philippe. Mr. President, we are deeply moved to stand here with you amidst the graves of brave American soldiers who gave their lives for our freedom. We remember and honor all those who took part in the First World War and who were killed or maimed

and those who, even if they survived, were often scarred forever by their dreadful experience. We will always be grateful for the sacrifice.

The United States of America fought side by side with Belgium and other European na-

tions. As President Woodrow Wilson said: "There is a price which is too great to pay for peace, and that price can be put in one word. One cannot pay the price of self-respect."

For Belgium, this was true when my great-grandfather, King Albert I, led our country in its rejection of the Kaiser's ultimatum and defended Belgium's status of neutrality. The horrors of the trench warfare, including the use of chemical weapons for the first time ever in world history, the deaths of so many soldiers—all this was the acid bath in which many of the old beliefs were dissolved.

The First World War led to many changes in all our countries. Many reforms were introduced in the following years. However, the so-called "war to end all wars" was followed by an even more brutal one, which engulfed most of the world, and which, moreover, saw the heart-rending atrocity of the Holocaust.

Our countries have learned the hard way that national sovereignty quickly reaches its limits when confronted with heavily armed adversary who do not respect that sovereignty. Thanks to visionary people, we started on the road of European integration. It was and remains a rocky road, but we are truly convinced that it is the only one. Today, international cooperation, both regional and global, is more than ever necessary to roll back the scourge of war and violence with the tragic wake of human suffering.

This year's ceremonies of remembrance must inspire all peace-loving nations to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder to spread the rule of law, human rights, and respect for each other. This is the best bulwark against war.

I know that the United States and Belgium will continue stand together in this endeavor.

Prime Minister Di Rupo. President Obama, Your Majesty, ladies and gentlemen: We are gathered today to remember, to remember the millions of soldiers and civilians who died during the First World War in Belgium and in the rest of Europe; and here, in Waregem, to especially remember the Americans who lost their lives in our cities in—and our countryside.

On behalf of Belgium, I will honor their memory and thank them and their families for

their terrible sacrifice, a sacrifice that will remain a part of our history and will always have a place in the hearts of the Belgian and American people. We will never forget.

Mr. President, Your Majesty, the ties between Belgium and the United States of America are very strong. I have said this before, and I'm saying it again today in the presence of President Obama: We, the Belgian and American peoples, share and cherish the same values of freedom, democracy, and progress. We have fought long and hard to obtain them, and we must work hard every day to keep them alive.

These values are our most precious gift to our young people and future generation. Therefore, we have to continue to draw lessons for the terrible war that started 100 years ago. And above all, we have to prevent new conflicts. Those who ignore the past are taking the risk to relive it. Each step to reconcile people is a step away from war. Each step to open up our hearts and minds is a step toward peace.

Mr. President, Your Majesty, ladies and gentlemen, the American sons who fell on our soil are our sons. I promise you, Mr. President, that we will always keep their memory alive. And the same time, we will never forget our Second World War liberators. They, as well, were examples of courage. We are determined to ensure the twin founts of peace, democracy, and human rights. We are determined to ensure the integrity of frontiers and the respect of international law. Here next to these graves, we make a solemn commitment to continue our efforts to promote peace and solidarity amongst people.

Mr. President, Your Majesty, the guns fell silent a long time ago, as did the voices of the fallen soldiers. But their example will always continue to inspire us.

President Obama. Your Majesty King Philippe, Prime Minister Di Rupo: I am honored to be here today. Thank you for welcoming me to this sacred place. To the staff of Flanders Field Cemetery and the people of Belgium, thank you for your devotion, watching over those who rest here and preserving these hallowed grounds for all of us who live in their debt.

As His Majesty and the Prime Minister mentioned, we just spent some quiet moments among the final resting places of young men who fell nearly a century ago. And it is impossible not to be awed by the profound sacrifice they made so that we might stand here today. In this place, we remember the courage of “Brave Little Belgium.” Here, we visited the grave of a young Polish immigrant to America who, just a few hours into his very first battle, gave his life for his adopted country. And here, we saw the headstones of two men from Brooklyn, New York, who lay as they fought, side by side.

Here, we also see that no soldier and no nation sacrificed alone. I’m told that this is one of more than 100 cemeteries tucked into the quiet corners of this beautiful countryside. It’s estimated that beneath about 50 square miles, there rest hundreds of thousands of men: Belgian and American, French and Canadian, British and Australian, and so many others.

We talked about how many of the Americans who fought on Belgian soil during the Great War did so under the command of His Majesty’s great-grandfather, King Albert. And while they didn’t always share a common heritage or even a common language, the soldiers who manned the trenches were united by something larger: a willingness to fight and die for the freedom that we enjoy as their heirs.

Long after those guns fell silent, this bond has endured. Belgians and Americans have stood soldier—shoulder to shoulder with our European allies in World War II and through a long cold war, then from Afghanistan to Libya. And today, Belgium is one of our closest partners in the world, a strong and capable ally. And thanks to the extraordinary alliance between our two nations, we know a level of peace and prosperity that those who fought here could scarcely have imagined.

And so before visiting the cemetery, His Majesty, the Prime Minister, and I were able to spend some time together. I was very grateful for the opportunity. And it was a chance to

reaffirm our commitment to keep—as strong as they’ve ever been—the bonds between our nations, a determination that I know is shared by the American and Belgian people.

Here today I’d also note that the lessons of that war speak to us still. Our nations are part of the international effort to destroy Syria’s chemical weapons, the same kinds of weapons that were used to such devastating effect on these very fields. We thought we had banished their use to history, and our efforts send a powerful message that these weapons have no place in a civilized world. This is one of the ways that we can honor those who fell here.

And so this visit, this hallowed ground, reminds us that we must never, ever take our progress for granted. We must commit perennially to peace, which binds us across oceans.

In 1915, a Canadian doctor named John McCrae sat in the back of an ambulance not far from here and wrote a poem about the heavy sacrifice he had seen. They became some of the most cherished and well-known words from that war. And they ended with a plea:

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

What is lesser known is that 3 years after he wrote those words—and thousands of miles away—an American schoolteacher named Moina Michael read McCrae’s poem. And she was so moved that she wrote a response:

Oh! you who sleep in “Flanders Fields,”
Sleep sweet—to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.

Your Majesty, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you again. What I’ve seen at Flanders Fields will stay with me always. To all who sleep here, we can say we caught the torch, we kept the faith, and Americans and Belgians

will always stand together for freedom, for dignity, and for the triumph of the human spirit.

May God bless you. May God bless the memory of all who rest beneath these fields.

And may God bless the peoples of both our nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:20 a.m.

The President's News Conference With President Herman Van Rompuy of the European Council and President José Manuel Durão Barroso of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium

March 26, 2014

Moderator. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the press conference following the EU-U.S. Summit in Brussels. I invite first the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy to present the main results of the summit. Mr. Van Rompuy, you have the floor.

President Van Rompuy. Good afternoon. It has been a great pleasure to welcome President Obama to this EU-U.S. Summit in Brussels.

We meet at a hugely important moment, certainly for peace and security on the European Continent. Events in Ukraine and elsewhere go to show that there are many unsettling uncertainties, and that's why the solid certainty of the transatlantic relationship is so crucial. It is the bedrock to face these challenges, a bond of friendship tested by history, and that bond is shockproof. Cooperation among our countries is unrivaled. So in our meeting today, we focused on the issues where together—together—we can provide the political steer at the highest level.

We obviously spoke about Ukraine, today's most pressing matter. It was a follow-up to our excellent exchange at the G-7 meeting in The Hague 2 days ago. Europe and the United States have a strong and coordinated position. For the EU side, I refer you to the bold statements of last week's European Council. We support Ukraine and its people in their pursuit for a better life as a nation. Crimea's illegal annexation is a disgrace in the 21st century, and we will not recognize it.

The first priority is to deescalate the situation. Russia's support for an OSCE mission in

Ukraine is a positive step. The fact that Russia and Ukraine's Foreign Ministers finally met in The Hague is another sign of more openness. However, if there is further escalation, we Europeans and Americans are ready to intensify sanctions. With the understanding that sanctions are a means to an end, the goal is a negotiated solution in respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and of international law.

We also stand by Georgia and Moldova, and European Union has brought forward to June the signing of the association agreement with them.

Apart from Ukraine, we talked about negotiations with Iran, about working to end the terrible war in Syria, and to stop violence and anarchy in the Central African Republic. Both are humanitarian tragedies.

The United States and Europe will continue their work to fight terrorism in the Sahel. And appalled by Egypt's mass death sentence of over 500 Muslim Brothers, we urge Egyptian authorities to restore the rule of law.

Our second major focus was the economy. We spoke about the recovery in Europe, which is taking hold. We should have 2 percent of growth next year. Thanks to much hard work, Europe and the euro zone have really moved on. The focus now is on reinforcing economic fundamentals and on jobs, and last week saw the finishing touch on the banking union, the centerpiece of a stronger euro zone.

And we also spent some time to discussing energy, especially energy security, and what we can do together to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian gas. Our G-7 Energy Ministers will meet on this soon.