

And it's going to be a great day. We have beautiful weather because the Easter egg roll is blessed. And we're going to have fun stuff going on. We've got the egg roll. We've got some storytelling. We've got entertainment. We've got wonderful athletes and performers like Cam and so many others. We've got obstacle courses and yoga and face painting and egg hunts. It's just going to be terrific. As Barack said, we love this event. This is the largest event that we do here on the South Lawn. We're going to have more than 30,000 people on the lawn today.

And we're just thrilled that this theme is focusing on one issue that is near and dear to my heart, and it's making sure that our young people are active and healthy. So while you're here, parents, look around. You're going to learn how to make healthy snacks that the kids will actually eat. I'm going to be over there on the chef's stage doing some demonstrations.

And I want to make sure that kids know that healthy eating and being active can be fun, because what today is about is having a whole lot of fun. And I hope you all do that, because we want our kids to be the healthiest and the strongest they can be so they can do well in school and live up to all of their

God-given potential. Isn't that right, parents?

The President. Right. Hey!

The First Lady. That's what we want for you all.

And we want to thank the Easter Bunny, as always, for being here. And I would be remiss if I didn't thank the hundreds of volunteers who make today possible. Thank you to our volunteers—

The President. Yay, volunteers!

The First Lady. —who have been out here setting up the South Lawn, who are going to make sure you guys get through these activities and have a great time.

So you all just enjoy. That's all you have to do from this point on, is have fun. And we'll be down there to participate in the egg roll. The President is going to read. I'm going to read a little bit. So we'll meet you down on the South Lawn, okay?

The President. All right.

The First Lady. All right. Have a great time. Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In her remarks, the First Lady referred to Camren Anthony Sherman, a 12-year-old singer from Philadelphia, PA.

Remarks at the Snohomish County Fire District 25/Oso Fire Department Firehouse in Arlington, Washington April 22, 2014

Well, good afternoon, everybody. I just had a chance to tour some of the damage from last month's mudslide and, most importantly, had a chance to spend some time with the families whose loved ones have been lost. I also had a chance to thank some of the amazing first responders, the firefighters, police officers, search-and-rescue crews, and members of the Washington National Guard who have been working around the clock to help this community recover from this devastating incident.

Governor Inslee, Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Congresswoman DelBene, Congressman Larsen, and the rest of the elected officials who are here, they've been relentless in making sure that Oso had the resources that it needs. And from the day of the tragedy, I've instructed my team to make sure that they get what they need to make sure that the search-and-rescue mission is going forward the way it should.

A FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team was on the ground immediately after the

mudslide, and a search-and-rescue team was deployed to help locate and recover victims. We immediately approved an emergency declaration to provide additional resources to State and local responders. And I followed that by approving a major disaster declaration to help residents and business owners rebuild and to help State and local and tribal governments with emergency work.

Today, that work continues. There are still families who are searching for loved ones. There are families who have lost everything, and it's going to be a difficult road ahead for them. And that's why I wanted to come here, just to let you know that the country is thinking about all of you and have been throughout this tragedy.

We're not going anywhere. We'll be here as long as it takes. Because, while very few Americans have ever heard of Oso before the disaster struck, we've all been inspired by the incredible way that the community has come together and shown the love and support that they have for each other in ways large and small.

Over the past month, we've seen neighbors and complete strangers donate everything from chainsaws to rain jackets to help with the recovery effort. We've seen families cook meals for rescue workers. We've seen volunteers pull 15-hour days, searching through mud up to 70 feet deep. One resident said: "We're Oso. And we just do it." That's what this community is all about. And I think the outstanding work of Sheriff Willy Harper here helping to coordinate all of this—I was saying, he's a pretty young sheriff, but he has shouldered this burden in an incredible way. And we're very, very proud of him, as we are of all the local responders.

This is family. And these are folks who love this land, and it's easy to see why, because it's gorgeous. And there's a way of life here that's represented. And to see the strength in adversity of this community, I think, should inspire all of us, because this is also what America is all about.

When times get tough, we look out for each other. We get each other's backs. And we re-

cover, and we build, and we come back stronger. And we're always reminded that we're greater together. That's how we'll support each other every step of the way.

I have to say that the families that I met with showed incredible strength and grace through unimaginable pain and difficulty. Uniformly, though, they all wanted to say thank you to the first responders. They were deeply appreciative of the efforts that everybody has made. And I know that many of the first responders have heard that directly, but it doesn't hurt to repeat that we're very appreciative of what you've done.

And I also want to say that some terrific lessons were learned in the midst of very hard times during this process, because almost uniquely, we had not just coordination between State, local, and Federal officials, but also coordination between volunteers and those officials. And I know that it required some improvisation and some kinks getting worked out, but it was important for the family members themselves and the community themselves to be hands on and participate in this process, particularly a community like this one, where folks are hearty and know how to do things and take great pride in being self-reliant. It was important that they weren't just bystanders in this process, they were involved every step of the way.

One last point I'll make: I've received a number of letters from residents—either Darrington or Arlington or Oso itself—over the last several weeks, and one in particular struck me. It was from a firefighter who I may have met today; he didn't identify himself. But he pointed out how those who were operating the heavy machinery during this whole process did so with an incredible care and delicacy because they understood that this wasn't an ordinary job, this wasn't just a matter of moving earth; that this was a matter of making sure that we were honoring and respecting the lives that had been impacted.

And two things were of note in that letter: number one, that this firefighter pointed out properly the incredible work that's been done under very tough circumstances; number two,

he was pointing out what others were doing, not what he was doing. And to see a community come together like this and not be interested in who's getting credit, but just making sure that the job gets done, that says a lot about the character of this place.

And so we're very, very proud of all of you. Michelle and I grieve with you. The whole country is thinking about you. And we're going to make sure that we're there every step of the

way as we go through the grieving, the mourning, the recovery. We're going to be strong right alongside you. All right?

Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Oso, WA, resident and volunteer Teresa Smith; and Willy Harper, fire chief, Snohomish County Fire District 25 in Oso.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Tokyo, Japan April 24, 2014

Prime Minister Abe. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to sincerely welcome President Obama as our state guest.

At the outset, I would like to once again express my heartfelt gratitude for the assistance from the United States in the aftermath of the great east Japan earthquake. More than 20,000 servicemembers of the U.S. Forces participated in the Operation Tomodachi. And as a matter of fact, Japanese people were greatly encouraged and helped by the assistance extended from the Government and the people of the United States. And I am truly grateful for that.

Japan has been walking on the path of peace based on its peaceful orientation in a consistent manner for the past 70 years after the Second World War. Japan and the United States share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, and fundamental human rights, and also we share strategic interests. And the alliance between these two nations is indispensable and irreplaceable as the foundation for a peaceful and prosperity—prosperous Asia-Pacific region.

Your visit to Asia this time is a testament to the U.S. revised policy which attaches importance to this region. This greatly contributes to regional peace and prosperity, and Japan strongly supports and also certainly welcomes this.

My administration intends to contribute to regional peace and prosperity more proactively

than ever, in line with the policy of what I call proactive contribution to peace based on the principle on international cooperation. And together with the United States, Japan would like to realize our leading role of the alliance in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific.

Today, at this meeting, I look forward to having exchanges with you on how the alliance should look like in the future, based on the cooperation we have had so far.

President Obama. Well, let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Prime Minister, and your delegation, as well as the Japanese people for the incredibly gracious hospitality that you've provided us so far during this visit.

As you indicated, the U.S.-Japan alliance is the foundation for not only our security in the Asia-Pacific region, but also for the region as a whole. And we have continued to strengthen it. We are looking at a whole range of issues that are challenging at this time, including the threats posed by North Korea and the nuclearization that's been taking place in that country. But because of the strong cooperation between our countries, I am confident that we will continue to make progress in the future.

Of course, the bonds between our countries are not restricted to a military alliance. We represent two of the three largest economies in the world, and we have the opportunity, by working together, to help shape an open and innovative and dynamic economy throughout the Asia-Pacific region.