

benefits, that our companies can compete fairly in areas like autos and IT and organic foods. And I discussed this with President Park last night. We both agreed that these are issues we can work through together. And given South Korea's interest in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, fully implementing KORUS also is the single most important step that South Korea can take now to show that it's prepared to eventually meet the high standards of TPP.

And finally, we are joined by some outstanding Korean companies that are already invested in the United States, and we want to thank them for their investments and the jobs that they're creating back home.

I just want to remind companies around the world that if you are looking for a great place to set up shop, come to the United States. We've got outstanding workers, great universities, incredible productivity, great energy sources, and a pretty big consumer market, last I checked. And you're also going to have a White

House and Federal Government that—working with State and local governments, who are absolutely committed to making it easier for companies to invest in the United States. And whether it's high skills that you're looking for or productivity, our open economy, research and development, innovation, I think more and more companies realize it makes sense to locate in the U.S. And with our SelectUSA initiative, we're making it easier to invest.

So I just wanted to thank these leaders. With that, I'm going to actually spend most of my time listening, but I look forward to all the suggestions or recommendations that are being provided by both the Korean and the U.S. business leaders, because I'm confident that this is going to be one of the key economic relationships of the 21st century.

All right. Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:11 a.m. at the Grand Hyatt Seoul hotel.

Remarks to United States Troops and Embassy Personnel at United States Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul April 26, 2014

The President. Hey! Thank you. Well, hello, Yongsan! It is—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Hey, who—[laughter]. It is good to be back at the Yongsan Garrison. I want to thank one of our military's most tested, trusted leaders for that outstanding introduction—General Mike Scaparrotti. Now, I've been told—I don't know if you've heard this story—that, years ago, Scap was actually an extra in a movie about the Battle of Inchon, the turning point of the Korean war. So it's only fitting that after a career of proud service that's taken him from West Point to Iraq, to Afghanistan, he is now commander of U.S. Forces Korea. And we could not be prouder of his effort.

He's got a great partner in our other representative, Ambassador Kim, a proud Korean American, for strengthening the rock-solid alliance between the United States and the Re-

public of Korea. Give Ambassador Kim a big round of applause.

All of you have helped keep this alliance the linchpin of security and stability in the Asia-Pacific. The Eighth Army is in the house.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The Seventh Air Force is in the house.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. U.S. Naval Forces Korea.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. U.S. Marine Forces Korea.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Special Operations Command.

Audience members. Hooah!

We've got our standing DOD civilians. And we have our wonderful U.S. Embassy staff are here as well.

Audience member. And the VA!

The President. Yes, good job, VA—in the house! [Laughter]

And I know we've got some outstanding spouses and family members, kids in the house. [Laughter] And I want to thank you as well, because you bear the burdens of service as well, whether it's separation from a loved one or transitioning to a new country. And I just want you to know that America is grateful for your sacrifice and your service.

Now, President Park and I just attended a briefing led by General Scaparrotti with the Combined Forces Command. And then, I signed the guest book that sits on top of a table where the Korean war armistice was signed. And both of those moments drove home the truth that, after more than 60 years, our alliance is as strong as it has ever been and as effective as it has ever been.

And nowhere is that more evident than in the professionalism and the interoperability of our militaries. Even when Scap had to travel to Washington to testify before Congress last month, he was never more than a phone call or a teleconference away from Admiral Choi. And that's because our forces on duty here—American and Korean—are highly trained, closely coordinated, fit to fight tonight and every other night.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. But obviously, in addition to dealing with the threat from North Korea, this is also an alliance that represents the incredible bonds between peoples. So I know that you provided quick support in response to last week's terrible ferry tragedy, because we understood when our friends are in trouble, America helps. And our hearts are broken for our Korean friends, especially the loss of so many wonderful young people. But we're inspired by the tales of heroism and selflessness: the young woman who tried to make sure everyone else had a lifejacket, even if it meant her own death; the man whose last words were, "I'm on my way to save the kids."

That's why America will continue to support every rescue and recovery effort. And it's that spirit that allows this alliance to endure: *Katchi kapshida*—we go together. That's what we're about. That's what we're about. That's been

our common commitment for more than 60 years, in good times and in bad.

It was 1950, just 5 years after the end of World War II, when Communist armies first crossed the 38th parallel. And at the time, many Americans couldn't place Korea on a map. But we knew—as much as we had already given, as weary as we were of war—that we had a stake in what happened here in the Korean Peninsula, that we had to roll back the tide of communism, that as Americans, we had to stand with our South Korean friends.

And then, in September, the Americans arrived. The alliance we led with Korean troops landed in a surprise attack. And all told, nearly 1.8 million Americans would join the fight those next few years. The conditions were terribly difficult. The combat was brutal. The danger was close. By the end, nearly 37,000 Americans would give their last full measure of devotion on this faraway soil, but not without pushing the invading armies back across the line they had dared to cross.

If you want to know what that hard-earned, long-defended victory looks like, you look around this country, the Republic of Korea. This country has risen from occupation and ruin and become one of the most vibrant and open democracies in the world. Seoul, the city that has sprung up around this garrison, leads one of the most advanced and dynamic economies in the world.

When our veterans witness this nation's progress, when our veterans come here and see this great and modern country for themselves, they can say with pride, their efforts and their sacrifice was worth it. They see the real results of what they've done: a South Korea that is a world leader and a true partner in Asian security and stability. They see a country like ours, where children can not only have dreams, but those dreams are encouraged, and he or she can grow up to become Secretary General of the United Nations or President of the World Bank or even Ambassador from the U.S. to the country he was born in.

None of this was an accident. Freedom is not an accident. Progress is not an accident. Democracy is not an accident. These are things

that have to be fought for. And you're part of that legacy. They must be won. And they've got to be tended to constantly and defended without fail. And here, on freedom's frontier, they are, by every man and woman who has served and stood sentinel on this divided peninsula.

The 38th parallel now exists as much as a contrast between worlds as it does a border between nations; between a society that's open and one that is closed; between a democracy that is growing and a pariah state that would rather starve its people than feed their hopes and dreams.

That's not the results of a war, that's the result of the path that North Korea has taken, a path of confrontation and provocation and pursuing the world's most dangerous weapons. And I want to be clear: The commitment that the United States of America has made to the security of the Republic of Korea only grows stronger in the face of aggression. Our alliance does not waver with each bout of their attention-seeking, it just gains the support of the rest of the world.

North Korea's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is a path that leads only to more isolation. It's not a sign of strength. Anybody can make threats. Anyone can move an army. Anyone can show off a missile. That doesn't make you strong. It does not lead to security or opportunity or respect. Those things don't come through force, they have to be earned.

And real strength is allowing an open and participatory democracy, where people can choose their own leaders and choose their own destiny. And real strength is allowing a vibrant society, where people can think and pray and speak their minds as they please, even if it's against their leaders. Especially if it's against their leaders. Real strength is allowing free and open markets that have built growing, thriving middle classes and lifted millions of people out of poverty.

We don't use our military might to impose these things on others, but we will not hesitate to use our military might to defend our allies and our way of life.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. So like all nations on Earth, North Korea and its people have a choice. They can choose to continue down a lonely road of isolation, or they can choose to join the rest of the world, seek a future of greater opportunity and greater security and greater respect, a future that already exists for the citizens on the southern end of the Korean Peninsula.

And if they choose this path, America and the Republic of Korea and the rest of the world will help them build that future. But if they do not, they should know that the commitment of the United States of America to the security and defense of the Republic of Korea has not wavered once in more than 60 years. It never has, and it never will.

This alliance is special, forged on the battlefield and has been fortified by the common values and mutual interest and mutual respect of our peoples. The United States and Korea are more than allies, we are friends. And this foundation of trust and security and stability that allows both our nations to thrive economically and socially is made possible by the service and sacrifice of every one of you, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, diplomats. You are the tip of the spear on freedom's frontier. You carry high the legacy left by all those who fought and served here. And to the family members, both here in South Korea and awaiting your return back home, I thank you for your service as well.

Because of that service and the service of generations of servicemembers and diplomats, our countries still stands, and our founding principles still shine, and nations around the world that once knew nothing but bitter tastes of fear, now know the blessings of freedom. That's because of you. I could not be prouder to be your Commander in Chief.

And now I'm going to come down and shake some hands and thank you in person.

God bless you, God bless the Republic of Korea, God bless the United States of America, and God bless our alliance. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Choi Yun-

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hee, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff of South Korea; and Park Ji-young and Yang Dee-hong, crewmembers of the South Korean ferry *Se-wol*, which sank on April 16.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on the Situation in Ukraine *April 26, 2014*

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, join in expressing our deep concern at the continued efforts by separatists backed by Russia to destabilize eastern Ukraine and our commitment to taking further steps to ensure a peaceful and stable environment for the May 25 presidential election.

We welcomed the positive steps taken by Ukraine to meet its commitments under the Geneva accord of April 17 by Ukraine, Russia, the European Union, and the United States. These actions include working towards constitutional reform and decentralization, proposing an amnesty law for those who will peacefully leave the buildings they have seized in eastern Ukraine, and supporting the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also note that the Government of Ukraine has acted with restraint in dealing with the armed bands illegally occupying government buildings and forming illegal checkpoints.

In contrast, Russia has taken no concrete actions in support of the Geneva accord. It has not publicly supported the accord, nor condemned the acts of pro-separatists seeking to destabilize Ukraine, nor called on armed militants to leave peacefully the government buildings they've occupied and put down their arms. Instead, it has continued to escalate tensions

by increasingly concerning rhetoric and ongoing threatening military maneuvers on Ukraine's border.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea and Sevastopol, which we do not recognize. We will now follow through on the full legal and practical consequences of this illegal annexation, including but not limited to the economic, trade and financial areas.

We have now agreed that we will move swiftly to impose additional sanctions on Russia. Given the urgency of securing the opportunity for a successful and peaceful democratic vote next month in Ukraine's presidential elections, we have committed to act urgently to intensify targeted sanctions and measures to increase the costs of Russia's actions.

Russia's actions in Ukraine and the response from the international community already have imposed significant costs on its economy. While we continue to prepare to move to broader, coordinated sanctions, including sectoral measures should circumstances warrant, as we committed to in The Hague on March 24, we underscore that the door remains open to a diplomatic resolution of this crisis, on the basis of the Geneva accord. We urge Russia to join us in committing to that path.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia *April 26, 2014*

King Abdul Halim. The Honorable President Barack Obama, President of the United States; Excellencies; honored guests; ladies and gentlemen: The Raja Permaisuri Agong

joins us in warmly welcoming you, Mr. President, and your delegation to Istana Negara on the occasion of your state visit to Malaysia.