

The Presidents noted Camp Lemonnier's critical role as an operational headquarters for regional security and the importance the base plays in protecting Americans and Djiboutians alike from violent extremist individuals and organizations. President Obama thanked President Guelleh for helping ensure the safety and security of U.S. personnel in Djibouti.

President Obama announced the United States' intention to provide enhanced security assistance and equipment to Djiboutian security forces to advance these shared regional security and counterterrorism goals, including by providing materiel and assistance to Djiboutian forces deploying to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The leaders also plan to expand liaison relationships as a critical way to deepen our partnership.

Shared Efforts in Somalia

The Presidents noted that transnational challenges in the Horn of Africa cannot be met by any one country alone. President Obama commended Djibouti's important contributions to peace and security in Somalia, including through its participation in AMISOM operations aimed at defeating al-Shabaab and by organizing a number of reconciliation conferences in support of peacemaking efforts. Djibouti has also strongly and consistently supported multinational efforts to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia.

President Guelleh noted that Djibouti's efforts as part of AMISOM have helped provide Somalis with their best chance to achieve secu-

rity, stability and peace in more than two decades. The two leaders discussed Djibouti's experience as a troop-contributing country to AMISOM. The Presidents highlighted the need to support renewed efforts by AMISOM and the Somali National Army to defeat al-Shabaab and to help bring security and stability to Somalia. This commitment has not been without burden and cost. President Obama praised the brave service of Djiboutian soldiers in Somalia and recognized the sacrifices members of the Djiboutian Armed Forces and their families have made to help bring peace to Somalia.

A Long-Term Strategic Partnership

President Obama and President Guelleh concluded their meeting by reaffirming their shared commitment to the special and long-standing relationship between the United States and the Republic of Djibouti. The leaders pledged to continue to work to strengthen our strategic partnership and contribute to a more secure world. To carry this important dialogue forward, they intend to establish a U.S.-Djibouti Binational Forum and to designate senior officials to lead the implementation of the commitments made today in the spirit of building a vibrant 21st Century Strategic Partnership grounded in friendship, mutual trust, and common security.

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

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 5, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! *Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca!* [Laughter]

Audience member. Hey!

The President. Hey! This is a rowdy crowd, I can tell. [Laughter] They're ready to party.

Audience member. Love the margaritas.

The President. The margaritas, I hear, are quite good. Be careful, though, they'll sneak up on you. [Laughter]

Well, thank you for joining our Cinco de Mayo celebration. It is wonderful to have so many Latinos and Latinas—and people who wish they were Latino or Latina. [Laughter] A lot of honorary Latinos and Latinas: On Cinco de Mayo, *todos somos Latinos!* [Laughter]

I'm just going to say a few words, and then we get back to the fiesta. No Cinco de Mayo would be complete without great food and

great music. So I want to thank our guest chefs: my good friend José Andrés; Pati Jinich is here as well. Our musicians: members of the Georgetown University Orchestra and our mariachis, Los Gallos Negros.

I'm honored to welcome our friends from other parts of the Americas. We've got Mexico's Under Secretary of North America, Sergio Alcocer, is here. The Ambassador to the United States, Eduardo Medina Mora, is here as well. Give them a big round of applause. Peru's Ambassador to the U.S. Harold Forsyth is here. I also want to welcome all the Members of Congress who are here today, including members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. And its outstanding Chairman, Rubén Hinojosa, is here. And as always, it's great to see Hispanic Americans from across my administration, whose contributions every single day make me proud.

Cinco de Mayo marks a great moment in Mexican history, one that ended up shaping the United States as well. One hundred and fifty-two years ago, a band of Mexican patriots in the town of Puebla faced an invasion by Napoleon III's troops. The French side was bigger, it was better trained and better armed. But the Mexicans grabbed whatever weapons they could and fought with all their might, and they won the battle. A few years later, thanks to the bravery and tenacity of the Mexican people, with support of the United States, the occupation came to an end.

And had the opposite happened, our nations would look very different today. Our friendship with Mexico has had an enormous influence on our history and our culture and our economy. Today, our governments work together on everything from stopping crime to promoting trade to protecting our environment. And millions of Americans are connected to Mexico through ties of friendship and language and family, and they make vital contributions to our Nation every single day. So today we remember with gratitude those brave fighters who triumphed in Puebla all those years ago and the generations of Mexicans and Americans who've sustained and strengthened us ever since.

Of course, we can honor our past by building an even brighter future together. And that means restoring our Nation's promise of opportunity for all so that everybody has a fair shot at the American Dream, which is why I fought so hard for the Affordable Care Act, because every American deserves quality, affordable health care. Thanks to the ACA, millions of Latinos now have access to expanded preventive care, and hundreds of thousands of Latinos have recently enrolled in health care plans; hundreds of thousands of young Latinos are able to stay on their parents' plans until they're 26.

It's the same reason I'm fighting to make sure every child has access to a world-class education, from pre-K through college. And thanks in part to our investments, our high school graduation rate is the highest on record, and the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000. That's worth applauding.

Education helps us find new frontiers for collaboration between the United States and Mexico and throughout the hemisphere. Now, that's why I launched the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative to significantly increase educational exchanges among our countries. And I just came from a discussion with leaders in business and education who see these exchanges as key to maintaining our competitive advantage. They understand that if we're serious about building a 21st-century workforce, then we're going to have to build knowledge and relationships that reach across borders. And that's how we're going to create new jobs and develop new markets, explore new ideas and unleash the hemisphere's extraordinary opportunity.

And opportunity for all is why I'm fighting so hard to fix a broken immigration system. [Applause] All right? I am convinced that America's prosperity and security depend on comprehensive, commonsense immigration reform. Last year, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate came together to pass a commonsense bill that would grow our economy and shrink our deficit, reward businesses and workers that played by the rules, all while upholding

May 5 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

our most cherished values as a nation of immigrants.

So far, the Republicans in the House have refused to allow meaningful immigration reform to move forward at all. We know there are Republicans in the House who want to do the right thing. I'm going to work with everybody who's serious about strengthening our borders, modernizing our legal immigration system, keeping more families together, and getting this done. And it's the right thing to do for our economy, for our security, and our future.

The majority of Americans agree with me on this. It's time for Members of Congress and Republicans in the House to catch up with the rest of the country. So I need all of you to go out there and mobilize, particularly over the next 2 months. Tell them to get on board. Get on board with business leaders and faith leaders, law enforcement, Republicans and Democrats across the country. Say yes to fixing our

broken immigration system. Let's get it done right now once and for all.

So today, on Cinco de Mayo, we celebrate our shared heritage, our shared history, our shared future. And that's not something to be afraid of, that's something that we need to embrace. That's what I'm going to be doing, not just today, but every day, to keep fighting for opportunity for all people and greater understanding between all nations. And I know that's what you're fighting for as well.

So gracias. Que Dios los bendiga, y feliz Cinco de Mayo. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to José Ramón Andrés Puerta, chef/owner, ThinkFoodGroup; and Patricia Jinich, chef/host, PBS's "Pati's Mexican Table" program.

Statement on the Death of Billy Frank, Jr.

May 5, 2014

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Billy Frank, Jr., Chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and a member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Billy fought for treaty rights to fish the waters of the Pacific Northwest, a battle he finally won in 1974 after being arrested many times during tribal "fish-ins." Today, thanks to his courage and determined effort, our resources are better protected and

more tribes are able to enjoy the rights preserved for them more than a century ago. Billy never stopped fighting to make sure future generations would be able to enjoy the outdoors as he did, and his passion on the issue of climate change should serve as an inspiration to us all. I extend my deepest sympathies to the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and to Billy's family, and to his many friends who so greatly admired him.

Statement on Israeli Independence Day

May 6, 2014

I send my warmest wishes to the Israeli people as they celebrate their independence. Generations of Jews dreamed of the day when the Jewish people would have their own state in their historic homeland, and 66 years ago today, that dream came true. Today, Israel thrives as a diverse and vibrant democracy and as a "startup nation" that celebrates entrepreneurship and innovation.

The United States was the first nation to recognize the Government of Israel in 1948, and today, we are still the first to come to Israel's defense. The enduring relationship between our two nations, based on shared democratic values and our unwavering commitment to Israel's security, has never been stronger. We will continue to work with Israel to support a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict,