

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 21, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2014.

The crisis with respect to grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage

in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United States interests in the region. Such actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the economic sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Presidential Commission on Election Administration

January 22, 2014

Hello, everybody. Glad you guys made it to work.

I just want to say thank you publicly to all the wonderful people here who served on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. I think all of us recall that in the last election in 2012, we had reports around the country of tremendously long lines for people when they had tried to vote, and in some cases, for hours they were stuck. The day of the election I said that we're going to need to do something about it.

And I think all of us share the belief that, regardless of party affiliation, that our democracy demands that our citizens can participate in a

smooth and effective way. And I called on Congress to work with us, but I also thought that it was important for us to have a bipartisan, independent panel that could actually dig into the facts and try to determine what can we do to improve this situation.

And unlike a lot of countries, we've got a pretty complex system. We vote a lot. We have local jurisdictions that run these elections, and it makes things a little bit more complicated. But I was confident that if we put some good minds to work, they could come up with some recommendations. As a consequence, we set up this Commission.

I asked my top attorney during my election campaign, Bob Bauer, to join with Mitt Romney's top attorney in 2012, Ben Ginsberg, to cochair this Commission. I think it's fair to say that they may have voted for different candidates in 2012—[laughter]—but what they shared was a reputation for integrity, for smarts, and a commitment to making sure that our democracy works the way it's supposed to.

And they have now, working with the rest of this Commission, put together an outstanding series of recommendations with an important goal, which is that no American should have to wait more than half an hour to vote. And they should know—they should be confident—that their vote is being properly counted and is secure. A lot of the recommendations they've made are common sense; they are ones that can be embraced by all of us. Importantly, my understanding is, a lot of the Commission recommendations are directed not simply at Congress or the Federal Government, but rather to

the State and local jurisdictions who are largely responsible for our elections.

And so we intend to publicize this and to then reach out to stakeholders all across the country to make sure that we can implement this, in part because one of the troubling aspects of the work that they did was hearing from local officials indicating that we could have even more problems in the future if we don't act now. The good news is, is that the recommendations that are contained in this Commission report are eminently doable.

So I just want to publicly, again, thank both Bob and Ben for taking on this largely thankless job. And I want to thank all of you for being so diligent and maintaining a sense of urgency, producing an outstanding report in a relatively short period of time.

So thank you very much, everyone.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

## Remarks on Sexual Assault Prevention Efforts January 22, 2014

*The President.* Thank you. Please have a seat. Well, hello, everybody. Welcome to the White House. To all of you in my administration, the partners with the White House Council on Women and Girls, led by Valerie and Tina Tchen, I want to thank all of you for being here today and for the work that you're doing every single day to advance a cause that matters to all of us, and that's preventing the outrage, the crime, of sexual violence in America.

I especially want to thank the members of my Cabinet who are here today. We've got Secretaries Chuck Hagel, Kathleen Sebelius, and Arne Duncan, as well as Attorney General Holder. And their presence here today, and the presence of so many leaders from across my administration, is a testament to how important we consider this issue and how committed we are across the entire Federal Government to meeting this challenge.

And that, of course, includes our outstanding Vice President. Few people have brought more passion to this fight over the decades than Joe Biden. Back when a lot of people believed that domestic abuse was a private family matter and women in danger often had nobody to turn to, Joe was out there saying: "This is unacceptable. This has to change." And thanks to Joe and so many others, this Nation enshrined its commitment in the Violence Against Women's Act.

Police officers and prosecutors got special training on domestic violence. More shelters opened across the country. A national hotline was created. And as Joe mentioned, a cultural shift began to occur. Americans came to see how serious this problem was and how we all needed to do more to address it. And that's resulted in more hope and more safety and a new chance at life for countless women. So Joe was on the frontlines on this, and you can tell his