

struggles that middle class families and those who want to get into the middle class, what they're going through, and those kids that I spoke to today, the struggles that they're going to be facing as they leave that high school. That's what tonight is about.

So I know I'm preaching to the choir here, which is okay, but I'd leave you with this thought before I take questions: Democrats do have one congenital disease, and that is that we don't vote during midterms and we don't feel the same sense of urgency during midterms, and we like the Presidential races and the hoopla and the glitz. But this is where the rubber hits the road. I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that the House of Representatives does the right thing, that we no longer have one extreme faction that is blocking what the majority of the American people want to see happen with comprehensive immigration reform.

But it would be a whole lot easier if Democrats vote in the midterms. On every one of these subjects, whether it's climate change or minimum wage, I'm taking steps that don't require congressional action, but we can make a whole lot more progress if we're voting in the midterms. And the only way that we're able to get the turnout that we need and the urgency

that we need and the enthusiasm that we need is if all of you feel that same sense of urgency, if you are as engaged and as committed as so many of you were in 2008, 2012, and Deval's campaign.

You got to feel in your gut that this is really important and put everything you got into it. That's what I'm going to do, despite having told Michelle that I'd already run my last campaign. [*Laughter*] It turns out, I had to tell her I've got one more left.

Thank you for what you've already done, but we're going to have to do a little bit more. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. at the residence of Paul and Joanne Egerman. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. William M. "Mo" Cowan, who was appointed by Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts to assume office on an interim basis following the resignation of former Sen. John F. Kerry; Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward J. Markey; Sen. Michael F. Bennet in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; and Sheila Harrity, principal, Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, MA. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and an Exchange With Reporters June 12, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's wonderful to have an opportunity to visit with Prime Minister Abbott. We had a chance to meet when I had the great honor of addressing the Australian Parliament. And we are so glad to be able to return the favor in the Prime Minister's first visit here to the Oval Office.

We don't have a better friend in the world, as well as the Asia-Pacific region, than Australia. They are a treaty ally. We cooperate on a whole range of issues. Historically, there hasn't been a fight that the United States was in that Australia wasn't standing shoulder to shoulder with us. And most recently, in Afghanistan,

Australian troops have made enormous contributions and made enormous sacrifices, and we're very grateful to them for that.

We had the opportunity this morning to discuss a wide range of issues, many of them focused on the importance of the Asia-Pacific region. We discussed the security cooperation that is continuing to deepen between our two nations as treaty allies. In addition to the marines that are now in Darwin and the rotations that have been established, we actually have arrived at additional agreements around force postures that will enhance the bilateral cooperation between our militaries and give us addi-

tional reach throughout this very important part of the world. And we're grateful for the cooperation there.

I should note that Australia, under the Prime Minister's leadership, is increasing its defense budget, even under tough times, recognizing that we all have to make sure that we're doing our fair share to help maintain global order and security.

We had an opportunity to discuss the strong commercial ties between our two countries. And both of us have been very invested in trying to bring the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP, to a successful outcome. Negotiations continue, but Australia has been a very constructive partner in that process, and we both agree that not only can this agreement help to bring about jobs and growth for our respective populations, but it will also help establish the kinds of norms and free market principles throughout the region that will be important for our long-term prosperity.

We had an opportunity to discuss the work that we try to do in the region with organizations like ASEAN to maintain basic rules of the road when it comes to maritime issues, the South China Sea. Obviously, both the United States and Australia have enormous trade relationships with China, and we both agree that it's important to continue to see China prosper and rise. But what's also important is that as China emerges as this great world power that it also is helping to reinforce and abide by basic international law and norms.

And we had an opportunity to discuss some of the hotspots and international concerns that are on the front page of the papers over the last several weeks and months. I shared with him my views after my trip to Europe about the situation in Ukraine and the possibility of still resolving that issue in a diplomatic fashion, but thanked the Australians for joining with us and being firm with the Russians about their need to abide by international law and the application of sanctions and other consequences when they do not.

We discussed the situation in the Middle East and obviously the concerns that we have around Iraq and Syria. Both our countries are

potentially threatened by jihadists and freedom fighters, as they call them, that are going into Syria, getting trained in terrorist tactics, and then potentially coming back to our countries and could end up being a significant threat to our homeland as well.

And we also had an opportunity to talk about North Korea and the continuing threat there and the importance for us to maintain vigilance, including additional coordination around protection from potential missile strikes from North Korea.

Finally, I've indicated to the Prime Minister that I'm very much looking forward to visiting Australia—one of my favorite countries to visit—for the G-20. And I assured him that we want to cooperate in any ways that we can to ensure that Australia's renowned hospitality is also coupled with a very productive set of G-20 meetings to talk global growth.

So I think that the Prime Minister and I share a whole range of concerns, but we also see a whole range of opportunities out there for increased cooperation. And I'm very glad that he's had the chance to come by today and have a very productive meeting.

So thank you, Tony.

Prime Minister Abbott. Well, thank you so much, Barack. This has been a really full and thorough engagement over the last hour or so. Obviously, I'm here to thank the United States for its deepening engagement in our region. I'm here to further entrench our security and our economic cooperation. I'm here to celebrate the extraordinary friendship between the Australian and the American peoples. And I'm thrilled to have you coming to the G-20 in November, because we have a very important job in November in Brisbane: to accelerate economic growth around the world so that we have more prosperity and more jobs.

Obviously, right now there are a whole range of security issues which the United States is leading on and where Australia is doing our part to secure the freedom and the safety of the world and its citizens. I want to assure the President that Australia will be an utterly dependable ally of the United States. The United States has had to bear many burdens,

many burdens. The United States has paid a very high price to secure freedom and prosperity for many countries, not just itself. And the United States should never have to do all that work on its own.

So it's been a terrific discussion. And I think that many good things will come from this meeting today.

President Obama. Well, thank you, Tony. I'm going to take just one question. Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

Iraq/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts/International Security Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, are you considering drone strikes or any sort of action to stop the insurgents in Iraq?

President Obama. Well, this is an area that we've been watching with a lot of concern not just over the last couple of days, but over the last several months, and we've been in close consultation with the Iraqi Government. Over the last year, we have been providing them additional assistance to try to address the problems that they have in Anbar, in the northwestern portions of the country, as well as the Iraqi and Syrian border. That includes, in some cases, military equipment. It includes intelligence assistance. It includes a whole host of issues.

But what we've seen over the last couple of days indicates the degree to which Iraq is going to need more help. It's going to need more help from us, and it's going to need more help from the international community.

So my team is working around the clock to identify how we can provide the most effective assistance to them. I don't rule out anything, because we do have a stake in making sure that these jihadists are not getting a permanent foothold in either Iraq or Syria, for that matter.

Part of the challenge—and I've said this directly to Prime Minister Maliki, and Vice President Biden has said this in his very frequent interactions with the Iraqi Government—is that the politics of Shia and Sunni inside of Iraq, as well as the Kurds, is either going to be a help in dealing with this jihadist situation, or it's going to be a hindrance. And frankly, over

the last several years, we have not seen the kind of trust and cooperation develop between moderate Sunni and Shia leaders inside of Iraq, and that accounts in part for some of the weakness of the state, and that then carries over into their military capacity.

So I think it's fair to say that in our consultations with the Iraqis, there will be some short-term, immediate things that need to be done militarily, and our national security team is looking at all the options. But this should be also a wakeup call for the Iraqi Government. There has to be a political component to this so that Sunni and Shia who care about building a functioning state that can bring about security and prosperity to all people inside of Iraq come together and work diligently against these extremists. And that is going to require concessions on the part of both Shia and Sunni that we haven't seen so far.

The last point I'll make: This—what's happened over the last couple of days, I think, underscores the importance of the point that I made at my West Point speech, the need for us to have a more robust regional approach to partnering and training partner countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa. We're not going to be able to be everywhere all the time, but what we can do is to make sure that we are consistently helping to finance, train, advise military forces with partner countries, including Iraq, that have the capacity to maintain their own security. And that is a long and laborious process, but it's one that we need to get started.

That's part of what the counterterrorism partnership fund that I am going to be calling for Congress to help finance is all about, giving us the capacity to extend our reach without sending U.S. troops to play Whac-A-Mole wherever there ends up being a problem in a particular country. That's going to be more effective. It's going to be more legitimate in the eyes of people in the region, as well as the international community. But it's going to take time for us to build it. In the short term, we have to deal with what clearly is an emergency situation in Iraq.

Prime Minister Abbott. Perhaps, Barack, I might take one question. David Spears [Sky News].

U.S. Foreign Policy/International Security Cooperation/Australia-U.S. Defense Relationship

Q. Mr. President, just on that point you made there about limitations of American power, what would it take for military intervention, be it in the Middle East, be it in the Asia-Pacific region? Where is the line drawn?

President Obama. Well, I gave a very long speech about all this, so I probably would refer you to that as opposed to repeating it. But the basic principle obviously is, is that we, like all nations, are prepared to take military action whenever our national security is threatened. Where the issues have to do with the broader international order—humanitarian concerns, concerns around rights to navigation, concerns around our ability to deal with instability or fragile states or failed states, and the consequences for populations there and refugee flows—those sorts of international issues, wherever we can, our preference should be to partner with other countries. We’re going to be more effective if we can work with other nations.

Q. What role can Australia play?

President Obama. And that’s why—well, that’s part of where Australia is so important to us. There are a handful of countries in the

world that we always know we can count on, not just because they share our values, but we know we can count on them because they’ve got real capacity. Australia is one of those countries. We share foundational values about liberal democracies and human rights and a world view that’s governed by international law and norms. And Aussies know how to fight, and I like having them in a foxhole if we’re in trouble. So I can’t think of a better partner.

Part of our task now in a world where it’s less likely that any particular nation attacks us or our treaty allies directly, but rather, more typically, that you have disorder, asymmetric threats, terrorist organizations—all of which can be extraordinarily disruptive and damaging, but aren’t the traditional types of war that so often we’ve been equipped to fight—it becomes that much more important for us to start building new partners—

Q. You—

President Obama. —who aren’t going to be as capable as the Australians right away, aren’t going to be as capable as our own troops. And that’s going to take some time. It’s going to take some resources, but we need to start now. We’ve learned some lessons over the last decade, and we need to start applying them. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2013 Women’s National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx June 12, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Please, please, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. And give it up for our special guests, the 2013 WNBA Champions, “Los Lynx,” the Minnesota Lynx. [Applause] Hey! We happen also to have some fierce Lynx fans, including Congressman Tim Walz, who is here, and I understand that Mayor Chris Coleman just arrived. So give them both a big round of applause. Chris is around here somewhere. There he is back there. Stand

up, Chris, so everybody can see you. Take credit.

Now, in 2012, when the Lynx came here after their first title, I said I had a feeling I might see them again before I left office. [Laughter] I just want to mention that I was right. [Laughter] And so you can fact-check that, PolitiFact. I got that one right. [Laughter]

One of your assistant coaches, Shelley Patterson, put it pretty simply: “Winning is what we like to do.” And it shows. Over the last 3