

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister John P. Key of New Zealand and an Exchange With Reporters

June 20, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome my good friend, Prime Minister Key, to the Oval Office. The last time I saw him, we were on a golf course in Hawaii with his son. And although we will not divulge the scores, it is important to note that John's son Max can outdrive both of us by a substantial amount.

During the course of my Presidency and John's Prime Ministership, I think it's fair to say that the U.S.-New Zealand relationship has never been stronger. We share values, we have enormously strong people-to-people relationships, we have excellent commercial ties, and we have increasing consultations and relationships between our militaries. And all of those components have deepened during the course of our tenures here.

We had an excellent conversation about many regional issues, as well as some broader issues and challenges. We spent a lot of time talking about trade and commerce in the Asia-Pacific region, and the United States and New Zealand were two of the initial members of the TPP coalition that is trying to create a high-standards trade regime in the most dynamic and fastest growing part of the world. New Zealand—as a country with a small population, but really good products—has a great interest in making sure that markets are open and rules of the road are abided by when it comes to trade.

And so New Zealand has been a great partner on that process, and we discussed a timeline whereby before the end of the year we're able to get a document that can create jobs both in New Zealand and the United States and the other countries that are participating and expand wealth for all parties concerned. And our hope is, is that by the time we see each other again in November, when I travel to Asia, that we should have something that we have consulted with Congress about that the public can take a look at and we can make a forceful argument to go ahead and close the

deal. But we've got a lot of work to do between now and then.

We had a good discussion about some of the other issues that are facing the Asia-Pacific region: the threat of North Korea and the need to continue to press on denuclearization there; the relationship with China, where we both agree that we welcome China's peaceful rise, and at the same time, we discussed my very strong view that it is important for us to be able to resolve disputes like maritime disputes in accordance with international law and encourage all parties concerned to maintain a legal framework for resolving issues, as opposed to possible escalation that could have an impact on navigation and commerce.

We had a good conversation about climate change, where New Zealand, I think, has been an excellent partner with us and other economies, recognizing that this is a threat that none of us can solve individually, that we're going to have to work on together. And so we discussed our plans for putting forward robust action in 2015 with the upcoming Paris conference.

And we discussed the state of the world economy. New Zealand has been doing very well, in part, as John explained, because of the rebuilding after the devastating earthquake that had happened there, but also because of the outstanding growth in its agricultural sector where it's one of the few countries that maybe can match us when it comes to agricultural productivity and the excellence of our products. But I think we share the view that it's important to sustain economic growth worldwide and worldwide demand at a time when Europe, for example, is still having challenges. And that's part of why something like the Trans-Pacific Partnership can be so important.

And finally, we discussed some core security issues. I'm proud that my home—my original home State of Hawaii is going to be welcoming a New Zealand ship coming into port for the first time in a couple of decades. And we're very proud of that. I'm sure you'll get a good

welcome when they come. And although New Zealand obviously is a small country with a small Armed Forces, the cooperation that we have on intelligence issues, New Zealand's excellent efforts when it comes to training and participating in peacekeeping operations makes it an invaluable partner. So we're very appreciative of that.

So overall, it was wonderful to see John and his delegation. And I indicated to him that I would love to come to New Zealand because I hear it's really nice. [Laughter] And I know the people are nice, because I've had a chance to meet them. So we're going to be working with my scheduler to see what I can come up with if not this year, certainly before the end of my Presidency. So, welcome. Thank you.

Prime Minister Key. Well, let me be brief. Mr. President, firstly, thank you for the opportunity to be in the White House. Look, I think the relationship between New Zealand and the United States continues to go from strength to strength, and that's in large part because of your leadership and your commitment to the New Zealand-U.S. relationship.

New Zealand and the United States have been the two partners, I think, in the Trans-Pacific Partnership that have always believed in a high-quality, comprehensive deal. And I think that that can be achieved. And I think there's more work to be done, but the prize at the end

of those negotiations is one that's worth it for both of our economies and for the other 10 partners that would join us. So I think that's a great objective.

We appreciate all the things you do, the leadership you show around the world. We know that's it's never an easy day in the office here in the Oval Office.

And lastly, I think we had a very good discussion about maritime security. And certainly, New Zealand holds very strongly to the view that everyone has to observe the rule of international law, the law of the sea. And peace and stability in every region of the world is important. And it's important to our two countries. So that's probably enough for me. But thank you very much for having us here again.

The President. Excellent. Thank you very much, everybody.

New Zealand-U.S. Relations

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. We just love having New Zealand as a partner in general on a whole range of issues.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23.

Statement on World Refugee Day *June 20, 2014*

Today I join people around the world in commemorating World Refugee Day. It is an opportunity to honor the resilience of those who flee violence and persecution and the dedication of those who help them.

The forces that shatter communities and uproot their residents are difficult to tame. This year we mark a grim milestone. Over 51 million people are now refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced persons, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That is more than at any time since World War II.

Nearly half of all Syrians—45 percent—have been driven from their homes. A quarter of them—more than 2.8 million—have become refugees in neighboring countries. Conflicts in the Central African Republic and South Sudan have each forced over a million people to flee. In just the past few days, turmoil gripping Iraq has displaced hundreds of thousands and threatens many more.

Refugee crises reveal what is worst and best about us. The huts set on fire, the apartment buildings flattened, the bullets sprayed at innocent civilians show the depths of our capacity for hatred and callousness. But those who aid