

Remarks During a Meeting With Representatives of Arab States Participating in Military Operations Against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization in New York City

September 23, 2014

Well, it is a wonderful opportunity for me to welcome these leaders—friends, partners from the region—and to say thank you to all of them for their participation and commitment to rolling back the violent extremism that has so disrupted Iraq and Syria and threatens the region as a whole.

And in addition to His Majesty King Abdullah, I want to give a special welcome to Prime Minister Abadi and say congratulations to him for his leadership. To our friends from Saudi Arabia, from Bahrain and Qatar, we want to thank you very much for everything that you have done, and the United Emirate—Arab Emirates as well.

This represents partners and friends in which we have worked for very many years to make sure that security and prosperity exists in this region. And what we've all seen is that, with the emergence of ISIL, so much progress is threatened and so many people's lives are threatened. And because of the almost unprecedented effort of this coalition, I think we now have an opportunity to send a very clear message that the world is united, that all of us are committed to making sure that we degrade and ultimately destroy not only ISIL, but also the kinds of extremist ideologies that would lead to so much bloodshed.

This is not going to be something that is quick, and it is not something that is going to be easy. It will take time. And it's not only a military effort. I think what we all understand here is that young people have to have opportunity. We have to make sure that we're providing the education that's necessary for young

people to succeed in a modern economy, that we all have to promote religious tolerance. And it is going to be also important to provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic growth in these communities.

These are all issues in which the United States has worked and will continue to work with these countries. And—but we also recognize that right now we have a very severe and significant threat. What we've seen from the world community is a recognition of that threat. And we are very appreciative of our partnership with all the countries here.

We are committed to a sovereign Iraq that is able to maintain its territorial integrity and provide for its own security. We are committed to a Syria that is at peace and is not having the sorts of spillover effects that are burdening its neighbors. We're committed to making sure that millions of people can return to their homes and that they can live in peace and security. And we are committed to making sure that we put an end to the kind of sectarian strife that has been so prevalent for these last several years and has harmed so many people.

So again, I just want to say thank you to all of you. This is obviously not the end of an effort, but is rather a beginning. But I'm confident with the kind of partnership that is represented here, that we'll be able to be successful.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:07 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel. In his remarks, he referred to King Abdullah II of Jordan; and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in New York City

September 23, 2014

First of all, I just want to thank Lise and Mark not just for tonight, but they have been

just incredible friends for a really, really long time, and they have been there when we were

up, and they have been there when we were down and everywhere in between and have never asked for anything other than just that I do the right thing. And those are the kinds of friends that you remember and the ones that last. And so I just want to say thank you to both of you and their beautiful daughters who, unfortunately, remind me that mine are on their way to college soon. [Laughter] They grow up too fast.

I've got a lot of friends in the room, people I've known for a long time and then some folks who I'm meeting for the first time. I want to spend as much time as possible answering questions and taking comments. There are two other people I want to acknowledge, because this is the reason we're here. My name is not on the ballot in November, but there are a couple of people who do extraordinary work every single day in the United States Senate. I had the pleasure of serving with them, and one of them is your own senior Senator from the great State of New York, Chuck Schumer.

You may not have heard of Chuck because he doesn't really do a lot of media—[laughter]—but he is tireless and incredibly effective. And one of the best young public servants that we have in our country, who has the thankless job of being the head of the DSCC, the Senator from the great State of Colorado, Michael Bennet.

First of all, I apologize for the traffic. Not much I can do about it. The blame is spread between me and another 160-or-so world leaders who converge upon New York every single year. Yet unlike some of the previous U.N. General Assembly meetings, this one really counts. As Mark alluded, we've gone through extraordinary challenges over the last decade, and when I came into office, the world economy was in a free fall, something we hadn't seen since the Great Depression. And we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. We were still in the midst of two wars. Challenges like climate change weren't being addressed.

And over the last 6 years, by every economic measure, we are better off: unemployment down, deficit cut by more than half, energy production booming, clean energy doubled,

our financial system much more stable than it was before, the stock market obviously doing pretty good, which means that not only New York does well, but 401(k)s across the country have been replenished. An auto industry has been saved; the housing industry has steadily improved. High school graduation rates are up; college attendance rates are up. Millions of people have health care that didn't have it before. And by the way, despite the predictions from the naysayers, it turns out that we've actually slowed the growth of health care costs in this country in an almost unprecedented fashion, which it's estimated saving us about \$800 billion so far, despite improvements in quality.

Despite that, I think there's some anxiety across the country, and the question is, why? And I offer three reasons. The first, which is most prominent in the news right now, is that there is great disorder in the world. It's not unprecedented. In many ways, it doesn't pose some of the same existential threats that we experienced during the Great Wars or during the cold war, but the instability that we see in the Middle East, the Russian aggression towards Ukraine, the breakdown in public health systems—or what public health systems ever existed in a place like Liberia—in the face of the Ebola crisis, and the emergence of a terrorist threat in ISIL that threatens to destabilize an entire region, all those things are justifiably making people wonder whether the center will hold.

And the good news is, this week what you're seeing is what American leadership means. I just came from a meeting in which we were actually able to get Arab countries, many of which have historically been on opposite sides of issues and sectarian conflict in the region, all united around fighting ISIL and eradicating the ideology, the extreme fanaticism that underlies what's happening in ISIL.

With respect to Ebola, we have made an unprecedented investment, and as a consequence of our actions, we have a good chance of saving as many as a million lives and making sure that there's not the kind of spillover that could end up being an epidemic in our country and affect our loved ones.

Climate change: We're going to be taking the lead and, in fact, potentially engaging with China in making sure that we move boldly and aggressively in confronting that significant threat. We've unified the world in isolating Russia and supporting not just the Ukrainian people, but the core principle that was part of the foundation of the United Nations, which is a respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small countries relative to large ones.

So what we've seen is American leadership at its best. It doesn't mean that the problems are easy or that they're solved anytime soon, but it indicates the degree to which we continue to be the one indispensable nation. And we should be proud of that. These are big challenges, but we're up to the task.

The second reason I think that there's still some disquiet out there is that although the economy has greatly improved, the incomes and wages of ordinary people have not. And some of this has to do with globalization trends and technology trends, but some of it has to do with policies both in the private sector and in our Government that have made it much more difficult for ordinary people to get ahead. And as concerned as people are about foreign policy, if you ask them what's their number-one concern, it continues to be making sure that if you work hard in this country, you can get ahead and, more importantly, your children have a chance to do better than you did. And for too many people, that proposition has become suspect.

And so the reason that I'm working so hard on behalf of the DSCC is because of what Chuck represents and what Michael represents and what the Senate Democrats represent, is an acknowledgement that we have to grow, and we grow best when everybody is part of the deal. We grow best when middle class families who work hard can save to send their kids to college, and we've got specific ways to help them send their kids to college. We do best when low-income workers who are trying to work their way up into the middle class are getting paid a decent wage, and we've got specific proposals that we know would lift millions of people out of poverty.

We know that our economy would grow faster if we reinvest in roads and bridges and ports. And if we do those things, then not only guys in hard hats would do well, but the entire economy starts growing. And when the economy grows, that means that people are getting hired. And when people are getting hired, then wages and incomes go up more rapidly.

So we have solutions that can make a difference. But that brings me to the third reason people are anxious, and that is, they just think Government doesn't seem to be capable of working anymore. And it's popular to suggest that somehow that's a problem of both parties, a plague on both their houses. But the truth of the matter is, it has to do with a very specific problem, which is, is that the opposition on the other side has become ideologically driven and doesn't seem capable of compromise; cannot say yes even to things they used to be for; and there's been a tendency to put politics ahead of what's best for the next generation.

Democrats aren't perfect. There are times where even I have some complaints, and they certainly sometimes have complaints about me. One of the great things about the Democratic Party is we're extraordinarily diverse. But on issue after issue after issue, we're prepared to take the commonsense, practical, fact-based, reasoned approach to solving problems, because we believe that government serves an important role in making sure that there's opportunity for the next generation.

And that's the reason we need to keep a Democratic Senate. I can list for you all the specific items that are at stake in this election, but the basic proposition is right now that we need a Government made up of people who share in the vision that we have a common role to play in making sure every kid in this country has opportunity and that we can't just look out for our short-term self-interest, we've got to also think about future generations.

That's what's at stake. And I'm prepared to do whatever I can over the next month on behalf of that vision. And I know Chuck is and Michael is, and your presence here today indicates that you are too.

So I'll just close with this basic thought. As challenging as things are—people always ask me, Barack, you must be feeling overwhelmed. They don't say "Barack" these days, but Michelle does. [*Laughter*] And the truth is, perhaps I'm just a little simple. I have never been more optimistic about America's prospects. I look at the data, and I look at the facts, and we have the best cards as long as we're playing right. And I think if we've got a Congress that recognizes that possibility and that opportunity, then we will play those cards right. And our kids will inherit a world that is safer and more prosperous and healthier and has less conflict than ever before in human history. And what

an extraordinary possibility to be able to deliver that to our kids and our grandkids. That's in part because of you. So thank you.

All right, guys. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:48 p.m. at the residence of Elizabeth Strickler and Mark T. Gallogly. In his remarks, he referred to Katharine, Grace, and Nell Gallogly, daughters of Ms. Strickler and Mr. Gallogly. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Iraq and the Authorization of Military Operations in Syria

September 23, 2014

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

In my reports of August 8 and 17 and September 1 and 8, 2014, I described a series of discrete military operations in Iraq to stop the advance on Erbil by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), support civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar, support operations by Iraqi forces to recapture the Mosul Dam, support an operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in the town of Amirli, Iraq, and conduct airstrikes in the vicinity of Haditha Dam.

As I noted in my address to the Nation on September 10, with a new Iraqi government in place, and following consultations with allies abroad and the Congress at home, I have ordered implementation of a new comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy to degrade, and ultimately defeat, ISIL. As part of this strategy, I have directed the deployment of 475 additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel to Iraq, and I have determined that it is necessary and appropriate to use the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct coordination with Iraqi forces and to provide training, communications support, intelligence support, and other support, to se-

lect elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish Peshmerga forces. I have also ordered the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary actions against these terrorists in Iraq and Syria. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Government of Iraq and in conjunction with coalition partners.

It is not possible to know the duration of these deployments and operations. I will continue to direct such additional measures as necessary to protect and secure U.S. citizens and our interests against the threat posed by ISIL.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107-40 and Public Law 107-243) and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public