

leadership to implement the Minsk agreements and to reach a lasting and comprehensive resolution to the conflict which respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We remain prepared to roll back

sanctions should Russia take the necessary steps.

NOTE: H.R. 5859, approved December 18, was assigned Public Law No. 113-272.

## Statement on the Appointment of Avril D. Haines as Deputy National Security Adviser *December 18, 2014*

Today I have the pleasure of naming Avril Haines as my Deputy National Security Advisor. Avril has been a key member of my national security team since early in the administration, including in her previous role as the National Security Council's Legal Adviser and in her current capacity as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. A model public servant, Avril is respected across the Government for her intelligence, work ethic, and humility, which she has displayed in positions spanning the three branches of Government. I

have the utmost trust and confidence in Avril, and I know she will continue to play a critical role in my administration's efforts to keep our Nation secure and promote American interests and values around the world.

Just as we welcome Avril, I again wish to thank and commend Antony Blinken, whom the Senate confirmed on Tuesday as Deputy Secretary of State. I look forward to continuing to work with Tony in his new capacity, and I am confident that Avril will fill his shoes expertly.

## The President's News Conference *December 19, 2014*

*The President.* Hello, everybody. We've really got a full house today, huh? Well, all I want for Christmas is to take your questions. [Laughter] But first let me say a little bit about this year.

In last year's final press conference, I said that 2014 would be a year of action and would be a breakthrough year for America. And it has been. Yes, there were crises that we had to tackle around the world, many that were unanticipated. We have more work to do to make sure our economy, our justice system, and our Government work not just for the few, but for the many. But there is no doubt that we can enter into the new year with renewed confidence that America is making significant strides where it counts.

The steps that we took early on to rescue our economy and rebuild it on a new foundation helped make 2014 the strongest year for job growth since the 1990s. All told, over a 57-month streak, our businesses have created

nearly 11 million new jobs. Almost all the job growth that we've seen have been in full-time positions. Much of the recent pickup in job growth has been in higher paying industries. And in a hopeful sign for middle class families, wages are on the rise again.

Our investments in American manufacturing have helped fuel its best stretch of job growth also since the 1990s. America is now the number-one producer of oil, the number-one producer of natural gas. We're saving drivers about 70 cents a gallon at the pump over last Christmas. And effectively, today, our rescue of the auto industry is officially over. We've now repaid taxpayers every dime and more of what my administration committed, and the American auto industry is on track for its strongest year since 2005. And we've created about half a million new jobs in the auto industry alone.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, about 10 million Americans have gained health insur-