

Statement on Signing an Executive Order Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to the Crimea Region of Ukraine

December 19, 2014

Today I issued an Executive order taking further steps with respect to the situation in Ukraine. The E.O. prohibits the export of goods, technology, or services to Crimea and prohibits the import of goods, technology, or services from Crimea, as well as new investments in Crimea. The E.O. also authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to impose sanctions on individuals and entities operating in Crimea. The E.O. is intended to provide clarity to U.S. corporations doing business in the region and reaffirm that the United States will not accept Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. I again call on Russia to end its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, cease its support to separatists in

eastern Ukraine, and fulfill its commitments under the Minsk agreements. My administration will continue to work closely with allies and partners in Europe and internationally to respond to events in Ukraine and to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its democratic development and reform efforts. We will continue to review and calibrate our sanctions, in close coordination with our international partners, to respond to Russia's actions.

NOTE: The statement referred to Executive Order 13685, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address

December 20, 2014

Hi, everybody. As 2014 comes to an end, we can enter the new year with new confidence that America is making significant strides where it counts.

The steps we took nearly 6 years ago to rescue our economy and rebuild it on a new foundation helped make 2014 the strongest year for job growth since the 1990s. Over the past 57 months, our businesses have created nearly 11 million new jobs. 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 since the nineties. America is now the number one producer of oil and gas, saving drivers about 70 cents a gallon at the pump over last Christmas. The auto industry we rescued is on track for its strongest year since 2005. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, about 10 million Americans have gained health insurance in the past year alone. And since I

took office, we have cut our deficits by about two-thirds.

Meanwhile, around the world, America is leading. We're leading the coalition to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. We're leading the global fight to combat the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. We're leading global efforts to address climate change, including last month's joint announcement with China. We're turning a new page in our relationship with the Cuban people.

And in less than 2 weeks, after more than 13 years, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over, and our war there will come to a responsible end. Today, more of our troops are home for the holidays than at any time in over a decade. Still, many of our men and women in uniform will spend this Christmas in harm's way. And as Commander in Chief, I want our troops to know: your country is united in our support and gratitude for you and your families.

The 6 years since the financial crisis have demanded hard work and sacrifice on everyone's part. But as a country, we have every right to be proud of what we've got to show for it: more jobs, more insured, a growing economy, shrinking deficits, bustling industry, booming energy.

Pick any metric you want—America's resurgence is real. And we now have the chance to reverse the decades-long erosion of middle class jobs and incomes. We just have to invest in the things that we know will secure even faster growth in higher paying jobs for more Americans. We have to make sure our economy, our justice system, and our Government work not only for a few, but for all of us. And I look forward to working together with the new Congress next year on these priorities.

Sure, we'll disagree on some things. We'll have to compromise on others. I'll act on my

own when it's necessary. But I'll never stop trying to make life better for people like you.

Because thanks to your efforts, a new foundation is laid, a new future is ready to be written. We have set the stage for a new American moment, and I'm going to spend every minute of my last 2 years making sure we seize it.

On behalf of the Obama family, I wish all of you a very merry Christmas.

Thanks, and have a wonderful holiday season.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on December 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast on December 20. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 20.

Statement on the Deaths of Wenjian Liu and Rafael L. Ramos *December 20, 2014*

I unconditionally condemn today's murder of two police officers in New York City. Two brave men won't be going home to their loved ones tonight, and for that, there is no justification. The officers who serve and protect our communities risk their own safety for ours ev-

ery single day, and they deserve our respect and gratitude every single day. Tonight I ask people to reject violence and words that harm and turn to words that heal: prayer, patient dialogue, and sympathy for the friends and family of the fallen.

Statement on the Stormont House Agreement in Northern Ireland *December 23, 2014*

I and Vice President Biden welcome the news from Belfast this morning that the political parties of Northern Ireland, together with the governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, have reached a broad agreement that paves the way for the continuation of Northern Ireland's governing institutions. Just as importantly, the agreement also enables further progress on dealing with the issues of the past. I congratulate all the leaders involved who, once again, have shown that when there is a will and the courage to overcome the issues that have divided the people of Northern Ire-

land, there is a way to succeed for the benefit of all. I look forward to the final ratification of this agreement by all the relevant parties and to the continued advancement of a peace process that is leading to a better future for the people of Northern Ireland. I also want to thank Gary Hart for his hard work in support of this agreement.

NOTE: The statement referred to former Sen. Gary W. Hart, in his capacity as the U.S. Secretary of State's Personal Representative for Northern Ireland.