

care about, and the leaders who are sitting around this table prove that today and prove it every day.

And I want you to know that you have a partner in me, you have a partner in this administration, and I'm confident that, working together, we can take some common-sense steps to make sure that America's infrastructure is safer, stronger, and more resilient for future generations, at the same time as we are also tackling the broader

problem of climate change and trying to slow the impact of that not just here, but around the world.

So I very much appreciate the wonderful participation. I know that some great ideas have already come out of this. And I'm looking forward to continuing to work with this group in the future. So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks on United States Foreign Policy *July 16, 2014*

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to briefly discuss the important actions we're taking today in support of Ukraine. Before I do, I want to take a few minutes to update the American people on some pressing foreign policy challenges that I reviewed with Secretary Kerry this afternoon.

First of all, I thanked Secretary Kerry and our outstanding civilian and military leaders in Afghanistan for their success in helping to break the impasse over the Presidential election there. Thanks to their efforts and, of course, thanks to the Afghans and the courage of the two candidates, both of whom I spoke to last week, the candidates have agreed to abide by the results of a comprehensive and internationally supervised audit that will review all the ballots, and to form a unity Government. If they keep their commitments, Afghanistan will witness the first democratic transfer of power in the history of that nation.

This progress will honor both candidates, who have put the interests of a united Afghanistan first, the millions of Afghans who defied threats in order to vote, and the service of our troops and civilians who have sacrificed so much. This progress reminds us that even as our combat mission in Afghanistan ends this year, America's commitment to a sovereign, united, and democratic Afghanistan will endure, along with our determination that Americans are never again threatened by terrorists inside of Afghanistan.

Second, John updated me on the negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. Over the last 6 months, Iran has met its commitments under the interim deal we reached last year: halting the progress of its nuclear program, allowing more inspections, and rolling back its most dangerous stockpile of nuclear material. Meanwhile, we are working with our P5-plus-1 partners and Iran to reach a comprehensive agreement that assures us that Iran's program will in fact be peaceful and that they won't obtain a nuclear weapon.

Based on consultations with Secretary Kerry and my national security team, it's clear to me that we have made real progress in several areas and that we have a credible way forward. But as we approach a deadline of July 20 under the interim deal, there are still some significant gaps between the international community and Iran, and we have more work to do. So, over the next few days, we'll continue consulting with Congress, and our team will continue discussions with Iran and our partners as we determine whether additional time is necessary to extend our negotiations.

Third, we continue to support diplomatic efforts to end the violence between Israel and Hamas. As I've said repeatedly, Israel has a right to defend itself from rocket attacks that terrorize the Israeli people. There is no country on Earth that can be expected to live under a daily barrage of rockets. And I'm proud that the Iron Dome system that Americans helped

Israel develop and fund has saved many Israeli lives.

But over the past 2 weeks, we've all been heartbroken by the violence, especially the death and injury of so many innocent civilians in Gaza: men, women, and children who were caught in the crossfire. That's why we have been working with our partners in the region to pursue a cease-fire: to protect civilians on both sides. Now, yesterday Israel did agree to a cease-fire. Unfortunately, Hamas continued to fire rockets at civilians, thereby prolonging the conflict.

But the Israeli people and the Palestinian people don't want to live like this. They deserve to live in peace and security, free from fear. And that's why we are going to continue to encourage diplomatic efforts to restore the cease-fire, and we support Egypt's continued efforts to bring this about. Over the next 24 hours, we'll continue to stay in close contact with our friends and parties in the region, and we will use all of our diplomatic resources and relationships to support efforts of closing a deal on a cease-fire. In the meantime, we're going to continue to stress the need to protect civilians—in Gaza and in Israel—and to avoid further escalation.

Finally, given its continued provocations in Ukraine, today I have approved a new set of sanctions on some of Russia's largest companies and financial institutions. Along with our allies, with whom I've been coordinating closely the last several days and weeks, I've repeatedly made it clear that Russia must halt the flow of weapons and fighters across the border into Ukraine; that Russia must urge separatists to release their hostages and support a cease-fire; that Russia needs to pursue internationally mediated talks and agree to meaningful monitors on the border. I've made this clear directly to Mr. Putin. Many of our European partners have made this clear directly to Mr. Putin. We have emphasized our preference to resolve this issue diplomatically, but that we have to see concrete actions and not just words that Russia, in fact, is committed to trying to end this conflict along the Russia-Ukraine border. So far, Russia has failed to take any of the steps

that I mentioned. In fact, Russia's support for the separatists and violations of Ukraine's sovereignty has continued.

On top of the sanctions we have already imposed, we are therefore designating selected sectors of the Russian economy as eligible for sanctions. We are freezing the assets of several Russian defense companies. And we are blocking new financing of some of Russia's most important banks and energy companies. These sanctions are significant, but they are also targeted, designed to have the maximum impact on Russia while limiting any spillover effects on American companies or those of our allies.

Now, we are taking these actions in close consultation with our European allies, who are meeting in Brussels to agree on their next steps. And what we are expecting is that the Russian leadership will see, once again, that its actions in Ukraine have consequences, including a weakening Russian economy and increasing diplomatic isolation.

Now, meanwhile, we're going to continue to stand with the Ukrainian people as they seek to determine their own future. Even in the midst of this crisis, they have made remarkable progress these past few months. They held democratic elections, they elected a new President, they're pursuing important reforms, and they signed a new association agreement with the European Union. And the United States will continue to offer our strong support to Ukraine to help stabilize its economy and defend its territorial integrity, because like any people, Ukrainians deserve the right to forge their own destiny.

So, in closing, I'll point out the obvious. We live in a complex world and at a challenging time. And none of these challenges lend themselves to quick or easy solutions, but all of them require American leadership. And as Commander in Chief, I'm confident that if we stay patient and determined, that we will in fact meet these challenges.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:44 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to

Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ahmadzai Ghani; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Infrastructure Development at the Port of Wilmington in Wilmington, Delaware July 17, 2014

Hello, everybody! Everybody, please have a seat. Please have a seat. It is wonderful to be back in Delaware.

Crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine

Before I begin, obviously, the world is watching reports of a downed passenger jet near the Russia-Ukraine border. And it looks like it may be a terrible tragedy. Right now we're working to determine whether there were American citizens on board. That is our first priority. And I've directed my national security team to stay in close contact with the Ukrainian Government. The United States will offer any assistance we can to help determine what happened and why. And as a country, our thoughts and prayers are with all the families of the passengers, wherever they call home.

Infrastructure Development

I want to thank Jeremie for that introduction. Give Jeremie a big round of applause. It is great to be in the State that gave us Joe Biden. We've got actually some better looking Bidens with us here today. [Laughter] We've got Beau and his wife Hallie are here. Give them a big round of applause. We love them. We've got Governor Jack Markell, Senator Chris Coons, Congressman John Carney, County Executive Tom Gordon, and the mayor of Wilmington, Dennis Williams. We've also got two terrific members of my Cabinet: Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx is here, and Treasury Secretary Jack Lew is here.

Jack Lew's signature is actually on your money. [Laughter] Although, it's kind of illegible. We teased him when he first became Treasury Secretary that he was going to have to fix his signature a little bit because it looked just like a caterpillar running along the bottom. [Laughter]

Now, the bridge behind me used to carry 90,000 cars every day—90,000. Since last month, it's been closed for repairs. Once workers are done repairing it, this bridge will be safer; it will be more reliable for commuters and for commerce. And thanks to a competitive grant program called TIGER—a program, by the way, that was part of the Recovery Act that we initiated when I first came into office and Joe Biden helped to manage—this port is rebuilding a wharf that will finally let Wilmington compete with other ports for the biggest cargo ships. [Applause] For the biggest cargo ships. So far, TIGER grants have given a boost to 270 infrastructure projects and thousands of jobs all across 50 States.

And that's what I'm here to talk about today, and I've been talking about this all week: creating more good jobs rebuilding America and the opportunity that we have to seize to rebuild the American middle class.

Now, after the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, in part because of the actions we took, primarily because of the strength and determination of the American people, our businesses have now added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Construction and housing are rebounding. The auto industry is booming; it was in a tailspin when we came in. Manufacturing is adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September of 2008, which is one of the fastest 1-year drops in nearly 30 years.

And the decisions we made—not only to rescue our economy, but to start rebuilding it on a firmer foundation—those decisions are starting to pay off. We are more energy independent. For the first time in nearly 20 years, we produce more oil here in the United States