

Remarks at Hill Air Force Base, Utah April 3, 2015

Well, good morning, everybody. It is wonderful to be in the beautiful State of Utah. And I want to thank General Buhler and Colonel Jolly and everyone here at Hill Air Force Base, one of the most outstanding facilities that we have.

Every single day, your work keeps our Air Force ready to meet the many threats that are out there: threats like ISIL, the work that we're doing in Iraq. You support our troops, our humanitarian missions around the world, and you keep the American people safe. And so to all of our folks in uniform and the civilians who support them, I want to say thank you for the incredible work that you do every single day. And I think the American people want you to know how much they appreciate it as well.

I just had the opportunity to take a look at the solar installation on this base and to meet with some of your outstanding representatives, including Senator Orrin Hatch and Congressman Rob Bishop, Mayor Ralph Becker, who's doing outstanding work, and leaders in the solar industry as well as our community college system, who were talking about Salt Lake City's commitment to renewable energy, its impact on jobs, its impact on business, and its impact on the environment and climate change.

Since I took office, solar electricity has gone up twentyfold. And our investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency haven't just helped to cut carbon pollution, they've made us more energy independent. And they've helped us create a steady stream of high-wage, good-paying, middle class jobs.

This morning we learned that our businesses created another 129,000 new jobs in March. And that adds up to 3 million jobs over the past year, more than 12 million new jobs over the past 5 years. And that's the longest stretch of private sector job creation on record. But we've got to be relentless in our work to grow the economy and create good jobs.

Parts of the globe have seen their economies weaken. Europe has had a weaker economy;

Asia has been slowing down. We have had the strongest economy, but we're impacted by what happens around the world. And that's why we have to redouble our efforts to make sure that we're competitive, to make sure that we're taking the steps that are needed for us to be successful.

And I think everybody here at Hill understands that one of the most important aspects of national security is strong economic security. We can't maintain the best military that the world has ever known unless we also have an economy that's humming. And a lot of our men and women in uniform at some point are going to transition into civilian life, and we want to make sure that after they've fought for our freedom that they've got jobs to come home to. And that means that, working together—not only the private sector has to work, but government has to work to take the steps that we know will grow our economy. And I'm hoping that, working with Congress, we can get some things done this year.

Rebuilding our infrastructure all across the country. Those are jobs that can't be exported. And not only does it put people to work right now, it makes us competitive over the long term because businesses are going to locate where they've got topnotch infrastructure.

Investing in education and job training to boost growth right here in the United States, because, again, businesses will locate where they've got a trained workforce.

Making sure that we are passing trade promotion authority. Orrin Hatch is working very hard on that. Utah is one of the leading exporting States in the country and part of the reason that this State has been so successful. And we're very grateful that Senator Hatch is working with Senator Wyden to make sure that we can get that deal done.

And what I'm doing here today is to highlight the fact that the solar industry is actually adding jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy. They're paying good jobs—they're good-paying jobs that are helping folks enter

into the middle class. And today what we're going to try to do is to build on the progress that's already been made.

I'm announcing a new goal to train 75,000 workers to enter the solar industry by 2020. As part of this, we're creating what we're calling a Solar Ready Vets program that's modeled after some successful pilot initiatives that have already been established over the last several years. It's going to train transitioning military personnel for careers in this growing industry at 10 bases, including right here at Hill.

And as part of this effort, we're also going to work with States to enable more veterans to use the post-9/11 GI bill for solar job training. And it's one of the many steps that we're taking to help nearly 700,000 veterans and military spouses get a job. In fact, about 30 percent of the Federal workforce is now made up of veterans. I've said it before, and I think employers are starting to catch on: If you really want to get the job done, hire a veteran.

So Hill is leading by example. It is getting about 20 percent—maybe a little higher than that—of its overall energy through renewable energy sources, including this installation. DOD—Department of Defense, our military across the board—is becoming more and more efficient because that saves money. And it means that we've got more money for personnel, for training, for equipment, for making sure our fighting forces are able to get the job done.

What is true for DOD has to be true for the entire country. And it's going to provide enormous prospects for jobs and careers for a

whole lot of folks out there—if we continue to make this investment.

So we've got to lead by example, invest in the future, train our workers for good, new jobs in the clean energy economy. That's how we're going to keep our economy growing, and that's how we're going to create new jobs and create more opportunity for the American people.

We're also, as a byproduct of that, going to make this country safer, and we're going to make the planet more secure. We're going to make sure that the environment that we're passing on and the incredible beauty of this remarkable State's passed on to future generations as well.

So thank you very much, all of you, for the great work you're doing. And thank you to the State of Utah for your wonderful hospitality. I was telling the Governor yesterday as we were riding from the airport that I'm going to make sure that I come back next time where I don't have to do so much work and I can visit some of these amazing national parks here and have a chance to visit with some of the wonderful people here in the great State of Utah.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Carl A. Buhler, USAF, commander, and Col. Ronald E. Jolly, Sr., USAF, deputy commander for maintenance, Ogden Air Logistics Complex, Hill Air Force Base, UT; Mayor Ralph E. Becker, Jr., of Salt Lake City, UT; and Gov. Gary R. Herbert of Utah. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the Observance of Passover

April 3, 2015

Michelle and I send our warmest greetings to all those celebrating Passover in the United States, in the State of Israel, and throughout the world.

Tonight, for the seventh year, I'll hold a Seder in the White House, and we'll join millions of Jewish families as we retell one of hu-

manity's great stories of liberation. The Exodus was neither easy nor quick. The Israelites' journey to freedom required them to choose faith over fear and courage over complacency. Above all, it required the works of an awesome God, who led them out of bondage with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.