

rights are being abused. And we are taking this issue human rights up front as priority issues, and I really appreciate the United States continuing support and leadership.

Again, thank you very much, Mr. President, for your global leadership. And I wish you continued good success. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former Vice President Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon of South Sudan. He also re-

ferred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Secretary-General Ban referred to President François Hollande of France; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Jim Yong Kim, President, World Bank; Christine Lagarde, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund; U.N. Special Envoy for Syria Steffan de Mistura; and U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. He also referred to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa; and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Remarks at the White House Demo Day Exhibition August 4, 2015

The President. Thank you. Hello, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. Look at you guys with all your gadgets. [Laughter] Sit down, come on.

Audience member. Happy Birthday!

The President. Thank you! [Laughter] Thank you very much. Thank you. I'm so gray. [Laughter] But I feel good otherwise.

Welcome to the White House, everybody. As a birthday treat to me, I thought I'd invite business leaders, investors, and government officials here for the first-ever White House Demo Day. [Applause] Yes. I think it's fair to say that when I was 8, I would have been confused by that choice. [Laughter] But now I think it's really cool, and I am so grateful to have all of you participating.

On a typical Demo Day, entrepreneurs, like many of you, pitch your ideas to potential investors in venture capital or elsewhere. And it is a high-stress, make-or-break moment that can change the course of your life. You don't—folks are peppering you with questions; you don't know what's going to be coming. Today was much more relaxed because you just had to pitch the President of the United States your ideas. [Laughter] So it's no problem—in front of TV cameras that everybody is going to watch. [Laughter]

Fortunately, everybody did a stellar job that I had a chance to meet. And here in this room, we've got some of the best and brightest entrepreneurs America has to offer, folks from all

across the country who are working every day to transform the way we live and learn and communicate. They have taken over my house. [Laughter] We've got people who are developing the next generation of lithium-ion batteries; a system of radio sensors that notices when a senior takes a fall while they're in their home; a robotic teddy bear that helps kids with diabetes learn about managing their health and staying active. There was an app that helps military families transition to their new communities, another app that helps you order replacement parts just by snapping a photo of the old one. And then, there are the folks at Astrobotics Technology in Pittsburgh. They are shooting for the moon, literally—[laughter]—with plans to land a rover on the lunar surface in the next couple of years, which is pretty exciting. I wouldn't mind seeing how that turns out. [Laughter]

You know, in America, that's who we've always been. We explore next frontiers, we're pioneers with a vision for tomorrow, whether it's Lewis and Clark, Sally Ride. We're the nation of Franklin and Edison and Carver and Salk; Jobs, Gates. And the folks here today are heirs to that legacy, and they're the driving force in a 21st-century economy.

Startups, young firms account for almost 40 percent of new hires. And as we've fought back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, those firms have helped our private sector cre-

ate more than 12.8 million jobs over the last 64 straight months, which is the longest streak of private sector job growth on record.

So, as President, I've worked to make it easier for entrepreneurs to strike out on their own. We've made it easier for folks to buy health insurance, making it portable so you can strike out and do your thing. We've made it easier to pay off student loan debt, although there was an app that I just saw, somebody who's really good at working with businesses to help manage student loan debt in an efficient way.

We have tried to download government data sets for new apps and innovations, following in the path of the National Weather Service and other data that's turned into commercial ventures. We've worked to connect to high-speed broadband and open access for a free and open Internet. And we're working on trade agreements to open up new markets for companies to sell their products overseas. Thanks to the bipartisan JOBS Act that I signed, it's easier for innovative companies to take the next step and go public. And when it's fully implemented, more startups and small businesses will be able to accept support from regular investors through crowdfunding.

So today, America is home to more high-tech companies than anyplace else in the world. And business leaders have declared that China is no longer the world's number-one place to invest, America is. With technological advancements like cloud computing and big data and 3-D printing, the fact is, there has never been a better time to launch an idea and bring it to scale right here in the United States, right now.

But we've got to make sure that we're taking full advantage of this moment by tapping all the talent America has to offer, no matter who they are or where they set up shop. And obviously, there are chronic challenges for any entrepreneur. Capital is tough to come by, but it's even tougher if you're not in one of a handful of cities that have a well-developed venture capital presence. It's always hard to get in front of the right people, but sometimes, it's harder if you're a woman or an underrepresented mi-

nority who all too often have to fight just to get a seat at the table.

Right now one study shows that fewer than 3 percent of venture-capital-backed companies have a woman as their CEO. Another study showed that fewer than 1 percent have an African American founder. Yet we've seen again and again that companies with diverse leadership often outperform those that don't. That's the market that is out there, not just here in the United States, but globally. So that lack of participation from everybody isn't good for business.

We've got to make sure that everybody is getting a fair shot; the next Steve Jobs might be named Stephanie or Esteban. [Laughter] They might never set foot in Silicon Valley. We've got to unleash the full potential of every American, not leave more than half the team on the bench.

And that's something that a growing number of tech companies have begun to recognize. So, in January, Intel announced that by 2020 they would achieve full representation of women and minorities in their U.S. workforce. Last week, Pinterest also announced ambitious new diversity goals of their own. Today we've got a series of public and private commitments to build on those efforts.

We've got more than 40 leading venture capital firms who are pledging more—pledging to do more to track and hire and support women and underrepresented minorities and veterans at their firms and portfolio companies. A pair of leading pension funds are committing to diversifying the ranks of those who manage their money. We've got companies like Xerox, Box, and others that are going to institute their own version of the NFL's Rooney Rule, named after my good friend Dan Rooney, of the Pittsburgh Steelers, which means interviewing at least one woman and one person of color for every senior position, just so that folks get a chance to get in the door.

And more than a hundred deans at America's engineering schools are committing to recruit and retain more diverse student bodies, building the pipeline for the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs, because this is

something we are seeing again and again and again. We are not producing all the technical talent, all the engineers that we need. And part of the reason is because too many girls and too many young people of color are getting intimidated and winnowed out of the process, not being mentored, not being encouraged, and we deprive ourselves of the talent that we need in order for us to continue to be a dynamic, innovative economy, because that's the part of the population that's growing.

So my administration is also going to do our part. We're expanding our TechHire initiative to 10 new cities and States, bringing together employers and local governments to create newer, faster training pathways, like coding boot camps, so that a more diverse group of workers can get hired and perhaps eventually start a business of their own. We're scaling up the National Science Foundation's successful Innovation Corps program at six more Federal agencies so we can help more of our scientists move their ideas out of the lab and into the marketplace.

More than 50 new cities have signed up to our "Startup in a Day" initiative. Many of them have earned cash prizes from the Small Business Administration to help them clear away all the red tape so that a local entrepreneur can apply for all the licenses and permits that they need to start a business in just 1 day.

So we hope that these efforts are going to open up new opportunities for all of our entrepreneurs—all of our would-be entrepreneurs. And in the months ahead, I look forward to seeing more folks across this country—investors, accelerators, universities, civic leaders, corporate giants, growing startups—all take new steps to build on these actions. Because you never know who's going to have the next big idea or what path will lead them there.

So I'm just going to give you a couple of examples because these are folks who are here. Take the story of Ramona Pierson. Where's Ramona? There—Ramona is right back here. So I was just talking to Ramona. Ramona is—this is a pretty remarkable story. Back in 1984, when she was 22 years old, Ramona had already been a U.S. Marine. She was a young,

dedicated, highly skilled professional in the prime of her life. One day, she's out for a run, and she was hit by a drunk driver. And she was in a coma for 18 months, woke up 18 months later, weighed 64 pounds, was bald and was blind, could not walk, could not speak, was moved into a nursing home. I think it's fair to say that a lot of people would be broken by that. In that nursing home, Ramona was surrounded by dozens of senior citizens, folks with a lifetime of knowledge and expertise and skills of their own as parents and teachers and community leaders. And they helped coach Ramona back to health. And she—they became her mentors. And over the next few years, Ramona had to relearn the most basic skills—walking, speaking, crossing the street—and she gained the perspective of others with challenges.

And decades later now, Ramona looks back on that process of learning by connecting with others as the catalyst for a startup she launched 3 years ago called Declara. And it's a technology platform that combines the power of a search engine with a worldwide network of experts so that we can all learn things faster from our fellow citizens and their lifetimes of knowledge. It's sort of like a Google meets Facebook, but it's there's all kind of stuff to it. Ramona was explaining it to me, and it was fascinating, and I understood about half of it. [Laughter] So today, Declara has users all around the world. It's attracted millions of dollars of capital. They've got a team of 65 employees, with women serving as CEO, COO, and head of data sciences.

That's the power of a good idea. And when Ramona was in that nursing home, I don't think anybody would have imagined that she was going to be a candidate to be a significant tech entrepreneur. Ideas can come from anybody and anywhere and can be inspired by any kind of life experience. And we've got to judge those ideas on their merits. We've got to make sure they're not filtered by misperceptions about who people are or who's capable of dreaming something up. That's at the very heart of America, the idea that any of us can make it if we try.

And together, if we have enough effort and enough urgency, our idea can move the world. We can all be a part of making sure everybody has that chance. And that's what the Demo Day is about here today. That's what our initiatives are about. That's what our outstanding 40 partners that are making announcements are all about here today. I'm very proud of them. And I can't wait to see what all of you end up doing.

And keep in mind that in about 18 months, I'm going to need a job. [Laughter] I've got some skills.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:14 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John Thornton, chief executive officer, Astrobotic; William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp.; Tony Aguilar, founder, Student Loan Benefits; former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Daniel M. Rooney, in his capacity as chairman of the National Football League's Pittsburgh Steelers; and Ramona Pierson, chief executive officer, Declara Inc.

Remarks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

August 5, 2015

Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you very much. I apologize for the slight delay. Even Presidents have problems with toner. [Laughter]

It is a great honor to be back at American University, which has prepared generations of young people for service in public life. I want to thank President Kerwin and the American University family for hosting us here today.

Fifty-two years ago, President Kennedy, at the height of the cold war, addressed this same university on the subject of peace. The Berlin Wall had just been built. The Soviet Union had tested the most powerful weapons ever developed. China was on the verge of acquiring a nuclear bomb. Less than 20 years after the end of World War II, the prospect of nuclear war was all too real. With all of the threats that we face today, it's hard to appreciate how much more dangerous the world was at that time.

In light of these mounting threats, a number of strategists here in the United States argued that we had to take military action against the Soviets, to hasten what they saw as inevitable confrontation. But the young President offered a different vision. Strength, in his view, included powerful Armed Forces and a willingness to stand up for our values around the world. But he rejected the prevailing attitude among some foreign policy circles that equated security

with a perpetual war footing. Instead, he promised strong, principled American leadership on behalf of what he called a "practical" and "attainable peace," a peace "based not on a sudden revolution in human nature, but on a gradual evolution in human institutions, on a series of concrete actions and effective agreements."

Such wisdom would help guide our ship of state through some of the most perilous moments in human history. With Kennedy at the helm, the Cuban missile crisis was resolved peacefully. Under Democratic and Republican Presidents, new agreements were forged: a Non-Proliferation Treaty that prohibited nations from acquiring nuclear weapons, while allowing them to access peaceful nuclear energy; the SALT and START Treaties, which bound the United States and the Soviet Union to cooperation on arms control. Not every conflict was averted, but the world avoided nuclear catastrophe, and we created the time and the space to win the cold war without firing a shot at the Soviets.

The agreement now reached between the international community and the Islamic Republic of Iran builds on this tradition of strong, principled diplomacy. After 2 years of negotiations, we have achieved a detailed arrangement that permanently prohibits Iran from obtaining