

disruptions that could trigger multiple conflicts around the globe.

That's not a future of strong economic growth. That is not a future where freedom and human rights are on the move. Any leader willing to take a gamble on a future like that, any so-called leader who does not take this issue seriously or treats it like a joke, is not fit to lead.

On this issue, of all issues, there is such a thing as being too late. And that moment is almost upon us. That's why we're here today. That's what we have to convey to our people—tomorrow and the next day and the day after that. And that's what we have to do when we meet in Paris later this year. It will not be easy. There are hard questions to answer. I am not trying to suggest that there are not going to be difficult transitions that we all have to make. But if we unite our highest aspirations, if we make our best efforts to protect this planet for future generations, we can solve this problem.

And when you leave this conference center, I hope you look around. I hope you have the chance to visit a glacier. Or just look out your airplane window as you depart and take in the God-given majesty of this place. For those of you flying to other parts of the world, do it again when you're flying over your home countries. Remind yourself that there will come a time when your grandkids—and mine, if I'm lucky enough to have some—they'll want to see this. They'll want to experience it, just as we've gotten to do in our own lives. They deserve to live lives free from fear and want and peril. And ask yourself, are you doing everything you can to protect it? Are we doing ev-

erything we can to make their lives safer and more secure and more prosperous?

Let's prove that we care about them and their long-term futures, not just short-term political expediency.

I had a chance to meet with some Native peoples before I came in here, and they described for me villages that are slipping into the sea and the changes that are taking place: changing migratory patterns; the changing fauna so that what used to feed the animals that they, in turn, would hunt or fish beginning to vanish. It's urgent for them today. But that is the future for all of us if we don't take care.

Your presence here today indicates your recognition of that. But it's not enough just to have conferences. It's not enough just to talk the talk. We've got to walk the walk. We've got work to do, and we've got to do it together.

So thank you. And may God bless all of you and your countries. And thank you, Alaska, for your wonderful hospitality. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Wheeler, Andrew Zajac, and Tom Zbyszewski, U.S. Forest Service firefighters who died attempting to control the Twisp Fire in Okanogan County, WA; Daniel Lyon, Jr., a U.S. Forest Service firefighter undergoing treatment for severe burns at the Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, WA; and Meredith Nettles, associate professor of earth and environmental sciences, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University.

Remarks at Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward, Alaska *September 1, 2015*

So you guys have been seeing these signs as we've walked that mark where the glacier used to be: 1917, 1951. This glacier has lost about a mile and a half over the last couple hundred years. But the pace of the reductions of the glacier are accelerating rapidly each and every year. And this is as good of a signpost of what we're dealing with when it

comes to climate change as just about anything.

This is one of the most studied glaciers because it's so easily accessible. But what it indicates, because of the changing patterns of winters with less snow, longer, hotter summers, is how rapidly the glacier is receding. And it sends a message about the urgency that we're going to

need to have when it comes to dealing with this, because obviously, when the glaciers erode, that's also a sign of the amount of water that's being introduced into the oceans, rising sea levels. And the warming generally is having an impact on the flora and fauna of this national park.

It is spectacular though. And we want to make sure that our grandkids can see this.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1 p.m.

Remarks Prior to a Boat Tour of Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward September 1, 2015

We're going to go out and look at some of these spectacular fjords on one of our Coast Guard cutters. But before we go out, I just wanted to mention that one of the things we've been trying to highlight during this trip is the changing nature of the Arctic, partly as a consequence of climate change. There's a whole series of strategic implications—economic and national security—and one of the things that we have to think about is how do we maintain our capabilities when it comes to maritime issues and commerce.

After World War II, we had seven icebreakers: four under the Navy, three under the Coast Guard. Today, in part because we haven't been reinvesting, although we technically have three, operationally, we really only have two, and only one heavy icebreaker. Just to give you a sense of contrast, Russia has about 40, and 11 icebreakers either planned or under construction.

Now, in light of the changes that are going to be taking place and the fact that we're going to be seeing more commercial vessels going through the Arctic, even if we're on top of the climate change issues, some of the change is already happening and is going to be inevitable. It's important that we are prepared so that whether it's for search-and-rescue missions, whether it's for national security reasons,

whether it's for commercial reasons, that we have much greater capabilities than we currently have.

So one of the things that I'm announcing today is a proposal to accelerate the construction of at least one additional heavy icebreaker and to work with Congress to make sure that we are producing a sufficient fleet to meet our economic, commercial, maritime, and national security needs.

And this is something that's been championed by Republicans like Senator Sullivan here in Alaska, but also Democrats like Maria Cantwell in Washington. We think that we should be able to generate some bipartisan support, although it's going to be a lot easier to do if we are not continuing to labor under the burdens of sequester that threaten our domestic priorities and investments, but also burden our military and our national security long-term investments.

These icebreakers are examples of something that we need to get on line now. They can't wait. And I'm looking forward to trying to work with Congress to make that happen. All right?

Enjoy the trip, guys. Stay warm out there.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. at Seward Harbor.

Remarks Following a Visit With Fishermen in Dillingham, Alaska September 2, 2015

The President. Let me just say something real quick. Wait. Do I need—can you guys get—catch me from here? The—so, obviously, we're thankful for the incredible display of fishing

skill that has been built up over hundreds of years. And all the folks here engage in subsistence fishing, which is part of the traditional way of life for so many here on Bristol Bay.