

concerned that efforts to build a just and wisely ordered society respect their deepest concerns and the right to religious liberty. That freedom remains one of America's most precious possessions. And as my brothers, the United States bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.

Mr. President, I'm finding it encouraging that you are proposing an initiative for reducing air pollution. Accepting the urgency, it seems clear to me also that climate change is a problem we can no longer be left to our future generation. When it comes to the care of our common home, we are living at a critical moment of history. We still have time to make the change needed to bring about a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.

Such change demands on our part a serious and responsible recognition not only of the kind of the world we may be leaving to our children, but also to the millions of people living under a system which has overlooked them. Our common home has been part of this group of the excluded, which cries out to heaven and which today powerfully strikes our homes, our cities, our societies. To use a telling phrase of the Reverend Martin Luther King,

we can say that we have defaulted on a promissory note, and now is the time to honor it.

We know by faith that the Creator does not abandon us; He never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity has the ability to work together in building our common home. As Christians inspired by this certainty, we wish to commit ourselves to the conscious and responsible care of our common home.

Mr. President, the efforts which were recently made to mend broken relationships and to open new doors to cooperation within our human family represent positive steps along the path of reconciliation, justice, and freedom.

I would like all men and women of good will in this great Nation to support the efforts of the international community to protect the vulnerable in our world and to stimulate integral and inclusive models of development so that our brothers and sisters everywhere may know the blessings of peace and prosperity which God wills for all his children.

Mr. President, once again, I thank you for your welcome, and look—I look forward to these days in your country. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:32 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Pope Francis was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors.

## Statement on the Death of Lawrence P. “Yogi” Berra *September 23, 2015*

Yogi Berra was an American original: a Hall of Famer and humble veteran, prolific jokester and jovial prophet. He epitomized what it meant to be a sportsman and a citizen, with a big heart, competitive spirit, and a self-

less desire to open baseball to everyone, no matter their background. Michelle and I offer our deepest condolences to his family, his friends, and his fans in New York and across the world.

## Statement on the Observance of the Hajj and Eid al-Adha *September 23, 2015*

As more than 2 million Muslims from around the world and across the United States mark the end of their holy pilgrimage of Hajj in

Mecca, Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to Muslims around the world celebrating Eid al-Adha.

This pilgrimage and Eid is about sacrifice, almsgiving, and equality. Thousands of Muslims around the world travel to Mecca and Medina, leaving behind all that is valuable and dressed in a simple white cloth, all standing shoulder-to-shoulder and equal before God. This experience signifies that no single person is more worthy than another. It is reminiscent of the principle upon which this country is built: “e pluribus unum”—out of many, one. Regardless of race, religion, and gender we are reminded that our rich diversity is what strengthens our Nation.

Eid is also a time to give food, shelter, and health services to those in need. Muslim Americans have always joined with other faith communities and entities to assist those suffering from hunger and conflict here at home and abroad. Once again, at a time of such desperate need, Muslim American organizations are among those at the forefront of attending to victims in this refugee crisis.

May the prayers for peace from those on pilgrimage as well as those of all beliefs be heard and answered. For all those celebrating, *Eid Mubarak* from my family to yours.

## Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Unit Citation to Members of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps September 24, 2015

Last year, as Ebola spread in West Africa, I said that fighting this disease was more than a national security priority, it was a critical example of American leadership. These professionals from the U.S. Public Health Service were some of the Americans on the frontlines of that effort. And before you came in, I had the opportunity to award them with the Presidential Unit Citation.

Now, understand that this corps of public health professionals are on the front lines all the time. And when you think of some of the most difficult, challenging tragedies or public health challenges that we’ve experienced over the last several decades, these are the folks who’ve been there from the start. After 9/11, after hurricanes, after Sandy Hook, after Deepwater Horizon or the Boston Marathon bombing, they come in to help support, advise, and oftentimes provide direct treatment in some of the most difficult situations imaginable.

But this was a unique deployment by this unit. Like so many others, they signed up to leave their loved ones and head straight into the heart of the Ebola epidemic, understanding that there were significant risks that they themselves would be confronting as a consequence of helping others. Thanks to their skill, thanks to their courage and their dedication,

they not only helped to keep the American people safe, they led a global response. It was not until they arrived that other countries were confident that they could send their own health workers in, because they knew that this outstanding group of individuals and health professionals were there on the job and would provide them the kind of support that could make their own efforts safe.

We’re not yet at absolute zero when it comes to this Ebola epidemic that took place in West Africa, but we have turned the tide on the epidemic. The cases we now see are much more sporadic, and we have, as a consequence of the work that these individuals started, started to build the kind of public health infrastructure in many of these countries that they can prevent an outbreak in the future.

I want to thank Secretary Sylvia Burwell, Surgeon General Murthy, because they were critical in helping to move us to the next phase of the fight: transitioning from a military response to a civilian response. We’re also now better prepared for disease outbreaks like Ebola here at home. Our health care professionals are better trained. Our screening processes have improved. Our hospitals are more capable with new protocols and new protective gear. None of this progress could have been made without America’s public servants like these.