

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; President Bashar al-Assad of Syria; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

of Russia; and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. President Park referred to former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. President Park spoke in Korean, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and President Park Geun-hye of South Korea on North Korea

October 16, 2015

On October 16, 2015, President Barack Obama of the United States of America and President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea committed to the following.

The United States-Republic of Korea alliance remains committed to countering the threat to peace and security posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs as well as other provocations. We will maintain our robust deterrence posture and continue to modernize our alliance and enhance our close collaboration to better respond to all forms of North Korean provocations.

The United States and the Republic of Korea share deep concern about the continued advancement of North Korea's UN-proscribed nuclear and missile capabilities and commit to address the North Korean nuclear problem with utmost urgency and determination.

We reaffirm our commitment to our common goal, shared by the international community, to achieve the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea in a peaceful manner. North Korea's continuing development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs is an ongoing violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and is contrary to North Korea's commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We strongly urge North Korea to immediately and fully comply with its international obligations and commitments.

We oppose any actions by North Korea that raise tensions or violate UN Security Council resolutions. In particular, if North Korea carries out a launch using ballistic missile technol-

ogy or a nuclear test, it will face consequences, including seeking further significant measures by the UN Security Council. In this regard, we are committed to working with the international community to ensure the effective and transparent implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions, including sanctions measures, concerning North Korea, and we encourage all states to exercise strict vigilance against North Korea's prohibited activities.

The United States and the Republic of Korea maintain no hostile policy towards North Korea and remain open to dialogue with North Korea to achieve our shared goal of denuclearization. Recognizing the common interests of our Six-Party Talks partners in the denuclearization of North Korea, we will continue to strengthen our coordination with China and the other parties in order to bring North Korea, which has refused all offers of denuclearization dialogue, back to credible and meaningful talks as soon as possible.

We reaffirm that we will never accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state, and that its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is incompatible with its economic development goals. Along with the rest of the international community, we stand ready to offer a brighter future to North Korea, if North Korea demonstrates a genuine willingness to completely abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and agrees to abide by its international obligations and commitments.

The United States appreciates President Park's tireless efforts to improve inter-Korean relations, including through repeated

overtures to North Korea, and welcomes President Park's principled approach that resulted in a peaceful resolution of the August tensions. The United States will continue to strongly support her vision of a peacefully unified Korean Peninsula, as envisaged in her Dresden address. We will intensify high-level strategic consultations to create a favorable environment for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula.

The Republic of Korea and the United States join the international community in condemning the deplorable human rights situation

in North Korea as documented in the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry report. We look forward to supporting the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Seoul). We remain dedicated to working with the international community to improve the human rights situation in North Korea and ensure accountability for human rights violations, as well as to improve the livelihood of the people in North Korea.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's Weekly Address *October 17, 2015*

Hi, everybody. Thirty years ago, there were 500,000 people behind bars in America. Today, there are 2.2 million. The United States is home to 5 percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of the world's prisoners. Every year, we spend \$80 billion to keep people locked up.

Now, many of the folks in prison absolutely belong there. Our streets are safer thanks to the brave police officers and dedicated prosecutors who put violent criminals behind bars. But over the last few decades, we've also locked up more nonviolent offenders than ever before, for longer than ever before. That's one of the real reasons our prison population is so high.

Ever since I was a Senator, I've talked about how, in too many cases, our criminal justice system is a pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. And we've taken steps to address it. We've invested in our schools to give at-risk young people a better shot to succeed. I've signed a bill reducing the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine. I've commuted the sentences of dozens of people sentenced under old drug laws we now recognize were unfair. The Department of Justice has gotten "Smart on Crime," refocusing efforts on the worst offenders and pursuing mandatory minimum sentences less frequently.

Still, much of our criminal justice system remains unfair. In recent years, more of our eyes have been opened to this truth, and we can't close them anymore. Good people of all political persuasions are eager to do something about it.

Over the next few weeks, I'll travel the country to highlight some of the Americans who are doing their part to fix our criminal justice system. I'll visit a community battling prescription drug and heroin abuse. I'll speak with leaders from law enforcement who are determined to lower the crime rate and the incarceration rate and with police chiefs who have dedicated their careers to keeping our streets and officers safe. I'll meet with former prisoners who are earning their second chance.

And I'll keep working with lawmakers from both parties who are determined to get criminal justice reform bills to my desk. Earlier this month, Democrats and Republicans came together in the Senate to introduce such a bill, one that would reduce mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders and reward prisoners with shorter sentences if they complete programs that make them less likely to commit a repeat offense. There's a similar bill working its way through the House, and I'm encouraged by these kinds of bipartisan efforts. It is real progress, not liberal ideas or conservative ideas, but commonsense solutions to the challenges we face.