

- expression or freedom of peaceful assembly;
- the use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces;
- the obstruction of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance; or
- attacks, attempted attacks, or threats against United Nations missions, international security presences, or other peacekeeping operations;
- to be a leader or official of:
 - an entity, including any government entity or armed group, that has, or whose members have, engaged in any of the activities described above; or
 - an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of:
 - any of the activities described above; or
 - any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien listed in the Annex or determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All executive agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's News Conference With President François Hollande of France November 24, 2015

President Obama. President Hollande, it has been an honor to welcome you to the White House before, in happier times than this. But as Americans, we stand by our friends, in good times and in bad, no matter what. So, on behalf of the American people, I want to once again express our deepest condolences to you and all of the people of France for the heinous attacks that took place in Paris.

We're here today to declare that the United States and France stand united—in total solidarity—to deliver justice to these terrorists and

those who sent them and to defend our nations. In that spirit, with heavy, but strong hearts, I welcome you today.

François, with your understanding, my statement today will be a little longer than usual. I've been traveling, and this is an important moment for our nations and for the world. This barbaric terrorist group—ISIL, or Daesh—and its murderous ideology pose a serious threat to all of us. It cannot be tolerated. It must be destroyed, and we must do it together. This is the unity of purpose that brings us here today.

On your visit here last year, you said that the French love America. We love the French. Sometimes, we Americans are too shy to say so, but we're not feeling shy today. We Americans love France because we dedicate ourselves to the same ideals: that all people deserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. France is our oldest ally. You helped us win our independence. We helped liberate France from fascism. We owe our freedom to each other.

We love France for your spirit and your culture, your *joie de vivre*. Since the attacks, Americans have recalled their own visits to Paris: visiting the Eiffel Tower or walking along the Seine. We know these places. They're part of our memories, woven into the fabric of our lives and our culture. I am very grateful to the French people for the hospitality they've always shown me and when they welcomed Michelle and our daughters on their first visit to the City of Lights. By my bed in the Residence is a picture of me and Michelle in Luxembourg Gardens kissing. [Laughter] Those are the memories we have of Paris. As early on, I had no gray hair.

So when tragedy struck that evening, our hearts broke too. In that stadium and concert hall, in those restaurants and cafes, we see our own. In the faces of the French people, we see ourselves. And that's why so many Americans have embraced the blue, white, and red. And it's why Americans, at candlelight vigils, have joined together to sing "La Marseillaise." We have never forgotten how the French people stood with us after 9/11. And today, we stand with you. *Nous sommes tous français*.

It's been noted that the terrorists did not direct their attacks against the French Government or military. Rather, they focused their violence on the very spirit of France, and by extension, on all liberal democracies. This was an attack on our free and open societies, where people come together to celebrate and sing and compete. In targeting venues where people come together from around the world—killing citizens of nearly 20 countries, including America—this was an attack on the very idea that people of different races and religions and backgrounds can live together in peace.

In short, this was not only a strike against one of the world's great cities, it was an attack against the world itself. It's the same madness that has slaughtered the innocent from Nigeria to the Sinai, from Lebanon to Iraq. It is a scourge that threatens all of us. And that's why, for more than a year, the United States, France, and our coalition of some 65 nations have been united in one mission: to destroy these ISIL terrorists and defeat their vile ideology.

Today President Hollande and I reviewed our coalition's progress. More than 8,000 airstrikes, combined with local partners on the ground, have pushed ISIL back from territory in both Iraq and Syria. Today President Hollande and I agreed that our nations must do even more together. U.S. assistance has supported recent French strikes in Syria, and we're going to keep stepping up that coordination. And as we saw with the attack in Mali, the terrorist threat goes beyond ISIL. This week, I'll sign legislation to sustain our support—including airlift and intelligence—to allies like France, as we work together to root out terrorist networks in Africa.

We'll do even more to prevent attacks at home. Building on our recent intelligence agreement, the United States will continue to quickly share threat information with France. And in the wake of Paris, and with the threats in Belgium, there's also a growing recognition among European nations that they need to ramp up additional efforts to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. As part of that, I'm calling on the European Union to finally implement the agreement that's been long in the works that would require airlines to share passenger information so we can do more to stop foreign terrorist fighters from entering our countries undetected. And I'm prepared to send teams of our experts to work on this with our European partners to make sure we're redoubling our efforts together.

Regarding the broader crisis in Syria, President Hollande and I agree that Russia's strikes against the moderate opposition only bolster the Asad regime, whose brutality has helped to fuel the rise of ISIL. We agree that Russia

could play a more constructive role if it were to shift the focus of its strikes to defeating ISIL. And likewise, President Hollande and I agree that the best way to bring peace to Syria is through the principles reaffirmed in Vienna, which require active Russian support for a cease-fire and a political transition away from Asad to a democratically elected government that can unite the Syrian people against terrorism.

Finally, François and I understand that one of our greatest weapons in the fight against ISIL is the strength and resilience of our people. And here I want to speak directly to the American people. What happened in Paris is truly horrific. I understand that people worry that something similar could happen here. I want you to know that we will continue to do everything in our power to defend our Nation. Since 9/11, we've taken extraordinary measures to strengthen our homeland security. Our counterterrorism, homeland security, and law enforcement professionals—Federal, State, and local—they are tireless. They have prevented attacks and they have saved lives. They are working every hour, every day for our security. They did so before Paris, they do so now, and they will not stop. They're the best in the world.

But it's not just our security professionals who will defeat ISIL and other terrorist groups. As Americans, we all have a role to play in how we respond to threats. Groups like ISIL cannot defeat us on the battlefield, so they try to terrorize us at home, against soft targets, against civilians, against innocent people. Even as we're vigilant, we cannot—and we will not—succumb to fear. Nor can we allow fear to divide us. For that's how terrorists win. We cannot give them the victory of changing how we go about living our lives.

The good news is, Americans are resilient. We mourned the lives lost at Fort Hood, the Boston Marathon, at Chattanooga. But we did not waver. Our communities have come together. We've gone to ballgames, and we've gone to concerts, and we've gone shopping. And men and women who want to serve our country continue to go to military recruiting offices. We're vigilant, we take precautions, but

we go about our business. To those who want to harm us, our actions have shown that we have too much resolve and too much character. Americans will not be terrorized.

I say all this because another part of being vigilant, another part of defeating terrorists like ISIL, is upholding the rights and freedoms that define our two great republics. That includes freedom of religion. That includes equality before the law. There have been times in our history, in moments of fear, when we have failed to uphold our highest ideals, and it has been to our lasting regret. We must uphold our ideals now. Each of us, all of us, must show that America is strengthened by people of every faith and every background.

And related to this, I want to note that under President Hollande, France plans to welcome 30,000 additional Syrian refugees over the next 2 years. Here in the United States, refugees coming to America go through up to 2 years of intense security checks, including biometric screening. Nobody who sets foot in America goes through more screening than refugees. And we're prepared to share these tools with France and our European partners. As François has said, our humanitarian duty to help desperate refugees and our duty to our security, those duties go hand in hand.

On the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France, there are words we know so well: Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. That's the spirit that makes us American. That's the spirit that binds us to France. That's the spirit we need today.

In closing, I want to salute the people of Paris for showing the world how to stay strong in the face of terrorism. Even as they grieve, Parisians have begun returning to their cafes, riding the Métro, and going to stadiums to cheer for their teams. Crowds gather in the Place de la République, including a mother who brought her children, she said, "to let them see that we should not be afraid." As one Parisian said, "Paris will always be Paris."

And next week, I will be joining President Hollande and world leaders in Paris for the global climate conference. What a powerful re-

buke to the terrorists it will be when the world stands as one and shows that we will not be deterred from building a better future for our children.

So, President Hollande, my fellow Americans, let's remember we've faced greater threats to our way of life before: fascism, communism, a First World War, a Second, a long cold war. Each and every time, we prevailed. We have prevailed because our way of life is stronger, because we stay united, because even as we are relentless in the face of evil, we draw on what's best in ourselves and in the character of our countries. It will be no different this time. Make no mistake, we will win, and groups like ISIL will lose. And standing with allies like France, we will continue to show the world the best of American leadership.

Vive la France. And God bless the United States of America.

Mr. President.

President Hollande. Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me, first and foremost, to thank the President of the United States, Barack Obama, for the solidarity he has shown immediately as we found out about the terror attacks. He was the first one to call me. It was very late in France, 2 a.m., when Barack called. The President of the United States had already expressed his solidarity towards France, his emotion, his compassion against the horror. And on that night, he meant to tell me that the United States stood by France, that the help that could be provided to France would have no limits, and that we had a duty, a joint duty, to pull our forces together and fight terrorism.

I do not forget either all of the messages that the American people sent to the French people over the past few days: the French colors, the French flags all abound in many gatherings; these candles in places that represent France here in the United States; "La Marseillaise," our national anthem, sung in official ceremonies. It is true that in 9/11, we all felt Americans. But after the 13th of November, Americans felt French. Our two peoples, together, merged as one, sharing the same emotion and also the most—same willingness to fight for freedom, to stand for our values.

We are not two similar peoples. We each have our own history. We have our own culture, our own background. But we share the same trust and the same faith in freedom. It is France that came under attack on the 13th of November. France, for what it is—a country which we consider unique in the world because France speaks to the world—France came under attack for what it represents, for what it stands for, for its culture, our way of living, as well as our values, our principles.

But by targeting France, the terrorists, the cowardly murderers, were targeting the world in these restaurants, in these cafes, as well as the Bataclan, that concert venue. They were men and women, most of them young, who came from 20 countries, at least. And they shared the same passion for life. And that's the reason why they were murdered.

My thoughts are with the friends and family of a young American student, Nohemi Gonzalez, who came as well to share a moment of culture and joy. I—my thoughts also go to this American band that was playing at the Bataclan. Our cultures on that occasion were together to bring the same enthusiasm, and they were hit by terrorists.

We are facing a terror group which organizes itself on a territory. They have some substantial resources. They are striving on smuggling of oil, drug, human beings. And since the beginning of the year, they hit many countries: Denmark, Tunisia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Turkey, Egypt, as well as Russia, by taking down a Russian plane.

So, together with President Obama, today we wanted on the occasion of that meeting, first of all, to share our determination—relentless determination—to fight terrorism everywhere and anywhere. We also meant to tell the world that we will not allow those who want to destroy what we've built, we will not allow them to do it—to destroy what we've built, generation after generation. They will not be able to damage the world. And against Daesh, we need a joint response, an implacable joint response.

France and the United States stand together to bring that joint response. Militarily, it is

about destroying Daesh no matter where they are. It is about taking out their financing, hunting down their leaders, dismantling their networks, and taking back the land they currently control. We, therefore, decided, President Obama and myself, to scale up our strikes both in Syria and in Iraq, to broaden their scope, to strengthen our intelligence-sharing regarding the targets we must aim at.

The priority is to take back key locations in the hands of Daesh in Syria. It is also a matter of urgency to close the border between Turkey and Syria and prevent terrorists from crossing the border and coming to Europe or other places and undertake such terrible attacks. We also took the decision to work together with our partners of the coalition in Iraq and to support all of those who are fighting Daesh on the ground.

The aim is to make sure that these forces can be supported, helped by all countries that are willing to act militarily to destroy Daesh. The resolution of the Security Council that was voted unanimously Friday, after being introduced by France and supported by the United States, this resolution provided us with the clear basis to act. This is what France is currently doing. Our aircraft carrier, the *Charles de Gaulle*, is currently in the east of Mediterranean and allows us to enjoy more capability. Yesterday, for the sixth time after the terror attacks in Paris, we struck Raqqa. In addition, we've been providing some assistance to Iraqi fighters in the region of Ramadi and in Mosul, within the framework of the coalition.

Now, diplomatically, both President Obama and myself have strengthened our cooperation as early as the night after the attacks. And I would like to commend what—everything that is being done so that intelligence and information available can be used to tackle terrorists and to follow their movements, so that we prevent them from doing them—from doing what they want to. Because beyond Syria and Iraq, what they want is somehow to spread fear everywhere so that we doubt, so that we make decisions which are exactly contrary to what we want in terms of freedom and rights. But we

will not give in. That being said, we have to defend ourselves and use intelligence.

Diplomatically, we're working on a credible political transition in Syria within the framework of the Vienna process. And I commend the work done by Ministers Fabius and Kerry to agree a timeline that will enable a cease-fire, of course, as quickly as possible, and to open up to a process that will lead to Bashar al-Asad's departure. Because we cannot imagine the Syrians getting together, gathering around the leader who is responsible for some—the most of 300,000 dead in a few years. So a government of unity is required, but that must lead to Asad's departure.

The Syrian crisis is directly relevant to Europe, first of all, given the terrorist threat, but also because there are millions of refugees fleeing the regime's bombs and Daesh atrocities. If we were to abandon them, we would betray what we are. This is the reason why I reject identifying migration and terrorism.

At the same time, we must control the borders. Today, people are risking their lives to flee when they travel at sea between Turkey and Greece. Turkey, therefore, plays an important role, and it is together with Turkey that we must find solutions so that the refugees can stay close to their country of origin. And we need to make sure that the required controls, the checks are implemented at the border.

On Thursday, I will be traveling to Moscow to meet with Vladimir Putin. And I will tell him that France can work together with Russia if Russia concentrates its military action on Daesh, against ISIL, and if Russia fully commits to the political solution in Syria. This is what we want to do. We want to gather all countries, all those who are willing to find and to implement a political solution in Syria. We do not want to exclude anyone, but we want to make sure that this political solution can eradicate terrorism.

Lastly, next week—that is, on Monday—we will be hosting in Paris the climate conference. I certainly could not imagine that this conference would be taking place against such a background. At the same time, I think there cannot be any better symbol or response, but to hold the conference in Paris where the at-

tacks took place, where we took the right measures in terms of security protections as well as in defending our values. There is no greater symbol than holding this conference on climate in Paris with some 150 heads of state and government.

Never before did France host so many leaders of the international community. They're coming to sort out the climate challenge and, again, to work and to find the right agreement so that we can limit greenhouse gases emissions and make sure that our children and our grandchildren live better, or simply can live. But they are also coming to express their support to freedom, to the fight against extremism, that radical Islam, which is becoming dangerous.

Yes, all of them are coming no matter their background, no matter their religion, their convictions, to express the same principle, the same values with the same word: life. Yes, simply life.

And this is the reason why I am very pleased that President Obama will allow us to succeed. I commend his recent statements over the past few weeks and months, but I also commend the commitments he's made in the name of the United States, as well as in the name of the world. It was very important that one of the most powerful countries in the world, if not the most powerful, and therefore with the highest level of emissions, could also be there to face the future like we've been facing history.

What we will be doing early next week in Paris means that we can continue to live, as well as protect our lives and prepare that of all children. France and the United States, given their history and the values, the founding values of both our nations, given our spirits, we both have that duty to act as a matter of—urgently against terrorism and against Daesh and, at the same time, to prepare for the future.

Against that background, even though it is a very dire one, I'm pleased to be with Barack Obama to send across that message to the entire world.

Thank you.

President Obama. We've got time for a few questions. I'm going to start with Roberta Rampton of Reuters.

Downing of Russian Military Aircraft by Turkey/Syria

Q. Thank you. This is a question for both of you. First, what is your reaction to Turkey shooting down a Russian plane today? And does this draw NATO into a confrontation with Russia? How do you keep this from spiraling out of control?

And, President Obama, what does this incident mean for future prospects of military coordination—more military coordination with Russia? And, President Hollande, ahead of your trip to Moscow on Thursday, what are the prospects for closer military coordination with Russia, given what happened today?

President Obama. Good. Well, first of all, we're still getting the details of what happened. And I expect to be in communications, potentially directly, with President Erdogan sometime over the next several days.

Turkey, like every country, has a right to defend its territory and its airspace. I think it's very important right now for us to make sure that both the Russians and the Turks are talking to each other to find out exactly what happened and take measures to discourage any kind of escalation.

I do think that this points to a ongoing problem with the Russian operations in the sense that they are operating very close to a Turkish border and they are going after a moderate opposition that are supported by not only Turkey, but a wide range of countries. And if Russia is directing its energies towards Daesh and ISIL, some of those conflicts, or potentials for mistakes or escalation, are less likely to occur.

I also think this underscores the importance of us making sure that we move this political track forward as quickly as possible. Like President Hollande, our view from the start has been that Russia is welcome to be part of this broad-based coalition that we've set up. There's never been a point in time in which we said that we don't want Russia or other countries that may have differences with us on a

whole host of other things to avoid working with us against ISIL.

The challenge has been Russia's focus on propping up Asad rather than focusing on ISIL. I had a conversation with President Putin in Turkey, and I indicated to him at the time that to the extent that they make that strategic shift—focus on the Vienna process, where they have been constructive, to try to bring all the parties together; try to execute a political transition that all parties would agree to; and refocus attention on going after ISIL—then there's enormous capacity for us to cooperate.

Until that happens, it's very difficult. It's difficult because if their priority is attacking the moderate opposition that might be future members of an inclusive Syrian Government, Russia is not going to get the support of us or a range of other members of the coalition.

But I do think that there is the possibility of cooperation. The sooner we agree to this political process, the less likely that you have the kinds of events that took place, apparently, today.

President Hollande. The event that took place is a serious one, and we can only regret it. Turkey is currently providing all of the information to NATO so that we can find out what truly happened and whether Turkey's airspace indeed was entered into. But we must prevent an escalation; that would be extremely damageable. The only purpose is to fight against terrorism and Daesh. This is what we must do, all of us: we, Turkey, Russia.

And what just took place, like Barack said, means that we must find a solution to the Syrian crisis, because we can see what the risks are otherwise: the risks of escalation. I, therefore, will be traveling to Russia this week because we have this resolution of the Security Council, and it does show that we must take action against Daesh, against terrorism. That resolution has been voted unanimously. In a way, that was the broadest possible coalition.

Then, I will ask President Putin, as I've done before and what I told the Russians a number of times already, that the strikes must be against Daesh, against terrorism, and those

who precisely are threatening us. They are threatening the Russians, like ourselves in Europe, like France that was targeted over the past few days. We must, therefore, coordinate ourselves, cooperate, but on that basis, and make sure that we're all acting against Daesh. And that will be part of the political process, one that must lead to the solution. And we all know what the parameters of the solution are or are not. We know that there's a deadlock today.

Lastly, I mentioned the *Charles de Gaulle* aircraft carrier, which is in the east of the Mediterranean now. As a matter of fact, there are also some Russian forces. And I, therefore, agreed with President Putin that we must share our intelligence so that we can act in coordination. We must not contradict ourselves. And it's already the case, and we'll continue to do so.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Syria

[At this point, a reporter spoke in French, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Q. Mr. President, the Americans have some Special Forces in Syria. Beyond the words and beyond what is happening, are you going to send some Special Forces as well to Syria? Are you considering some ground intervention there?

Mr. President, beyond the emotion that we can feel here, beyond these beautiful statements, for more than a year we heard all of you saying that Asad must go, that a political transition is necessary in Syria. Mr. President, can you today, here, in front of us, tell us a specific date, a deadline for Asad to go?

President Obama. Who is this addressed to? Me or for him?

[The reporter spoke in English as follows.]

Q. Both of you, Mr. President, yes.

President Obama. We're both Presidents. [Laughter]

Q. I'm sure you understand French a little bit, Mr. President, but I can translate in English, if needed.

President Obama. No, no, I had the translation. You said "President," and we've got two Presidents here. [Laughter]

Q. Good.

President Obama. Okay.

President Hollande. I will not provide you with a date, because it must be as soon as possible. That is one of the requirements for a solution to be found. But at the same time, allow me to underline something. There is a new mindset now. The crisis in Syria has been ongoing for 4 years—4 years. There are probably more than 300,000 deaths—dead. And this is not just relevant to the countries of the region, which are hosting the refugees. It is relevant to Europe and the entire world now with that issue of refugees. And those who believe that we could wait some more and that, in any case, it was far away, they now realize that we have an influx of refugees, that the terrorists—the risk is everywhere due to Daesh. We, therefore, must act.

You also asked me what we were going to do, what more. We will intensify the strikes. We will have some more specific target to make sure that Daesh resources, their means are cut off, including their command centers, the trucks carrying oil, their training centers where they prepare terror attacks. We will continue and we will intensify our strikes at the heart of the cities which are currently in the hands of Daesh.

France will not intervene militarily on the ground. It is for the local sources—forces to do so. We've been supporting them for a number of months. We will continue to do so. And they will do the job on the ground after we—after our strikes that will enable them to do so. But France will take its responsibilities regarding that support, which is absolutely necessary.

President Obama. Let me just make a couple of broader comments about the operations against ISIL. As was already indicated, we've taken thousands of strikes, have taken thousands of ISIL fighters, including top commanders and leaders, off the battlefield. We

have squeezed their supply lines. We have empowered and armed local groups that are pushing against them, including, most recently, in Sinjar. We're providing training and assistance to the Iraqi Government as they prepare to retake places like Ramadi that had been overrun.

We've seen some success. But the question now is, how can we accelerate it? And in fact, even before the tragedy in Paris, I had gathered together my national security forces—it had been a year—to review where we had made progress, what worked, what did not, and had put together a plan to accelerate and advance the pressure that we can place on ISIL. And we intend to execute on those plans, but we also think, as François said, that there may be new openness on the part of other coalition members to help resource and provide additional assistance both to the coalition as a whole and to local forces on the ground.

With respect to Mr. Asad, I think we've got to let the Vienna process play itself out. It is our best opportunity. And so the notion that there would be an immediate date in advance of us getting a broad agreement on that political process and the details, I think, doesn't make sense. As soon as we have a framework for a political transition—potentially, a new Constitution, elections—I think it's in that context that we can start looking at Mr. Asad choosing not to run and potentially seeing a new Syria emerge.

But it's going to be hard. And we should not be under any illusions. Syria has broken down. It began to break down the moment that Mr. Asad started killing indiscriminately his own people. ISIL was able to move into Raqqa in part because of a thorough rejection on the part of many Syrians of the Asad regime, and a power vacuum emerged.

And it is going to be a difficult, long, methodical process to bring back together various factions within Syria to maintain a Syrian state and institutions and to create the kind of stability that allows people to start coming back in and rebuilding their lives. But it's possible. And the urgency that we've seen even before Paris out of countries like Russia indicate that

they recognize they can't be there too long and ultimately win a military battle successfully.

Olivier Knox, Yahoo! News.

Downing of Russian Military Aircraft by Turkey/Syria/Terrorist Attacks in Paris, France/Europe-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. *Monsieur President, bonjour et merci.* Mr. President, could you tell us whether the Russian plane did, in fact, breach Turkish airspace? And given the fury of the Russian response on economic, diplomatic, and rhetorical fronts, how concerned are you that there might also be a military component, if not in Turkey, then perhaps with expanded action against coalition interests inside Syria?

[The reporter spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Q. And, Mr. President, regarding the measures announced today when it comes to strengthening the cooperation on military intelligence and all this, had they been taken a month or weeks ago, do you think they would have prevented the terror attacks that took place in Paris, or will it enable us to prevent some further terror attacks?

President Obama. We don't have all the information yet, so I don't want to comment on the specifics. We will be gathering all that information. We expect the Turks to provide information. I'm sure the Russians will have some information. And we'll be able to confirm what happened in part through our own intelligence and our own tracking of that border area.

As François indicated, my top priority is going to be to ensure that this does not escalate. And hopefully, this is a moment in which all parties can step back and make a determination as to how their interests are best served.

The Russians had several hundred people of their own killed by ISIL. And the flow of foreign fighters out of Russian areas into Syria poses an enormous, long-term threat to Russian territory. So there is a potential convergence of interests between the various parties. It requires us working with them to make the

kind of strategic shift that's necessary and that, frankly, I've talked to Putin about for 5 years now. It requires a recognition that the existing structure cannot gain the legitimacy to stop the war, and until you stop the war, you're going to have a vacuum in which these kinds of terrorist organizations can operate more effectively.

Let me say one last thing, because I've tracked the question that you posed to President Hollande about what could or could not have been prevented. All of our intelligence personnel here in the United States, across the Atlantic, work tirelessly, as I said earlier, to disrupt plots and prevent terrorists attacks. The vast majority of their successes in disrupting plots are not advertised. You never hear about them. But were it not for the dedication of those intelligence and law enforcement and military professionals, this would be a much more dangerous world.

So you have to be careful about speculating about "what if" and "could have" and "would have" in a situation like this. Because it's hard. You have eight individuals with light weapons; that's hard—that's a hard thing to track. What is true, though, is that we can do a better job of coordinating between countries. And I've been talking to our European partners for quite some time now about the need for better intelligence, sharing passenger name records, working to ensure that when people enter into Europe—particularly now—that the information across various borders is shared on a timely basis, and you have biometric information and other technologies that can make it more accurate. It doesn't mean it's always going to be a hundred-percent foolproof, but we can do better on those fronts.

And one of the challenges has been, frankly, in the past several years, that you have different legal traditions, concerns about privacy and civil liberties, all of which are entirely legitimate. I don't think those can be ignored now, because that's part of the—those are part of the values that we—that make us who we are and that we have to adhere to.

But I do think that this is a reminder that this is a dangerous world. And rooting out small bands of terrorist groups who maintain

good operational security and are using modern technologies in ways that are hard to track, that that's a tough job. And we're all going to have to pool our resources much more effectively together than we have in the past. And I think when François goes back to Europe, his leadership, the leadership of other Presidents and Prime Ministers around this issue is going to be as important as anything that we do. Okay?

President Hollande. Allow me to go back to what Daesh truly is. It is somehow an organization, a terrorist group occupying a territory in Iraq and Syria, killing. And they want to install rules that dishonor humanity. This is what Daesh is doing there. And this is what they are trying to do in other countries, everywhere chaos stands.

And then, we have to deal with the number of networks more or less organized in a number of countries that are being used to lead terror attacks, like was the case precisely in Paris. We know that this dreadful plan was prepared in Syria and then organized in a number of countries. And there are also some accomplices in France, given that some of the terrorists are French, those who committed these acts of war.

So, if we want to tackle terrorism, we must act not only to destroy Daesh where they are—in Syria, in Iraq—but we must also dismantle and destroy these networks. How can we proceed? Well, first of all, militarily, by intensifying our strikes, by taking back these territories, thanks to the local forces on the ground, which we can support by finding a political solution in Syria, by making sure that the territorial integrity of Iraq is restored. This is what we can do.

Then, when it comes to protection measures to protect our territory and our people, this is what I announced in France, and this is what we have to do to eradicate these networks and all of these accomplices and those who are present. Some of them just arrived; others have been there for a long time, and they are not necessarily identified as a threat. It is, therefore, necessary that we strengthen yet further our cooperation in terms of intelligence.

The Paris attacks generated a lot of emotion. But that's not enough—compassion, solidarity. And I take note of it, but we must act. And for a number of days now, I've been trying to convince—convincing all the countries that can act to do so.

I met with David Cameron yesterday. He announced that he would take a number of measures to his Parliament. That is important. Today I'm here with Barack so that we can act with greater intensity and coherence as well. Tomorrow I will be hosting German Chancellor Angela Merkel so that European countries, including Germany, can face up to their responsibilities, including in terms of military—intelligence and police cooperation and maybe more. I will also travel to Moscow, so that Russia acts, can take action against Daesh and only against Daesh. And then I will receive Matteo Renzi, the head of the Italian Government. I will also have an opportunity to talk to all of the European leaders, given that a European Council, together with Turkey, will be held on Sunday.

So it is all of that that must get together and enable us to implement coordination, cooperation in our actions so that we can act on the source, Daesh, and networks that they can use. It is that strength that will enable us to succeed.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Russia/Syria

[A reporter spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Q. A question from BFMTV. Both of you today have talked about coordination, cooperation against Daesh. Does it mean that this single coalition—which you mentioned last week, President Hollande—is gone? That it is inconceivable to have the Russians and the Americans to work together under this single command?

And then Bashar al-Asad, you said you could not put a date on his departure. Does it mean that his departure is not a preamble or prerequisite for the future of Syria?

President Hollande. Regarding the coalition of the international community, I believe that the resolution approved by all at the Security Council enabled us to say that now the entire world is committed to fighting against Daesh. Then—and this is what I will check when I travel to Moscow—we need one single goal; that is, to tackle terrorism and fight against Daesh militarily. And I believe that we can have some further cooperation and coordination militarily to do more.

At the same time, we have to be clear when it comes to the political solution, the one that will enable us to find an outcome for Syria. And in this respect, like we've said, and—but we can repeat it, Bashar al-Asad cannot be the future of Syria.

In Vienna, we are already working with all of the countries, even though they do not necessarily—they do not have the same stance: Turkey, Iran, Gulf countries, the United States, France, and of course, all of those who are meant to find a solution. But we must work on that transition, a transition where Bashar al-Asad plays no role. Because he's been the problem, so he cannot be the solution.

President Obama. Just to comment very quickly, we've got a coalition of 65 countries who have been active in pushing back against ISIL for quite some time. France has been a central part of that coalition, as have European countries, Arab countries. Countries as far flung as Australia and countries in Southeast Asia are part of that coalition.

Russia right now is a coalition of two, Iran and Russia, supporting Asad. Given Russia's military capabilities and given the influence they have on the Asad regime, them cooperating would be enormously helpful in bringing about a resolution of the civil war in Syria and allow us all to refocus our attention on ISIL.

But I think it's important for—to remember that you've got a global coalition organized. Russia is the outlier. We hope that they refocus their attention on what is the most substantial threat and that they serve as a constructive partner. And if and when they do, it will make it easier for us to go after ISIL and Daesh.

Although I think it's also important to recognize that the kinds of airstrikes that they're carrying out—just like the kinds of airstrikes that we're carrying out—in and of themselves are not sufficient. And the work that we do to bolster local fighting forces, the cutting off of supply lines, financing, oil, reducing the flow of foreign fighters, the intelligence work that needs to be done—all of that is something that we are doing now and that they can supplement.

But that's going to be a process that involves hard, methodical work. It's not going to be something that happens just because suddenly we take a few more airstrikes. And that's the kind of hard work that I know France is prepared to do, the United States is prepared to do, and perhaps, in the future, Russia will be as well. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, President Obama referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Paris, France, residents Raphaella Giraudi and Raphaëlle Oudart; President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. President Hollande referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius of France; U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy. President Hollande spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom November 24, 2015

The President. Hello, everybody! Please. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Ev-

erybody, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody.