

Eagle Center in La Crosse, WI, for broadcast on July 4. The transcript was made available by the

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Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration July 4, 2015

Everybody having a good time? Everybody, give it up for Bruno Mars! And the band!

Michelle and I just want to say to everybody here, we love you. On this day, we thank everyone who does so much each and every day to defend our country, to defend our freedom. We are grateful to our Armed Services. We are grateful to our military families. We are grateful to our veterans.

Without you, we could not enjoy the incredible blessings that we do in this greatest country on Earth. And we are so appreciative to all of you. We hope you are having a good time. The weather is cooperating. And Michelle and I, Malia, Sasha, we could not be more privileged to have gotten to know so many of you

and to know all the sacrifices that you make on our behalf each and every day.

So we just want to wish you the happiest Fourth of July and remind ourselves that freedom is not free. It's paid by all the folks who are here today and all the folks who are around the world. We want to thank those who aren't with their families on this holiday season because they're posted overseas. We want to especially remember them.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:56 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Bruno Mars.

Remarks on United States Efforts To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization and an Exchange With Reporters at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia July 6, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday weekend, especially our men and women in uniform. This Fourth of July we were honored to once again welcome some of our incredible troops and their families to share Fourth of July and fireworks at the White House. And it was another chance for us, on behalf of the American people, to express our gratitude for their extraordinary service around the world every single day.

And that includes the work that brings me here today, our mission to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group ISIL. This is a cause, a coalition, that's united countries across the globe, some 60 nations, including Arab partners. Our comprehensive strategy against ISIL is harnessing all elements of American power, across our Government: military, intelligence, diplomatic, economic, devel-

opment, and perhaps most importantly, the power of our values.

Last month, I ordered additional actions in support of our strategy. I just met with my national security team as part of our regular effort to assess our efforts—what's working and what we can do better. Secretary Carter, Chairman Dempsey, I want to thank you and your team for welcoming us and for your leadership, including General Austin, who's leading the military campaign. And I want to summarize briefly where we stand.

I want to start by repeating what I've said since the beginning. This will not be quick. This is a long-term campaign. ISIL is opportunistic, and it is nimble. In many places in Syria and Iraq, including urban areas, it's dug in among innocent civilian populations. It will take time to root them out, and doing so must