

Statement on the 25th Anniversary of Ukrainian Independence *August 24, 2016*

Twenty-five years ago today, Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union. On behalf of the American people, I'm proud to join the Ukrainian people in marking this historic anniversary. As we have been reminded in recent years, Ukraine's path has not always been easy. From the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who linked arms in a great human chain in 1990 to the fallen heroes of the Maidan, realizing the dream of independence has called on the solidarity and sacrifice of the Ukrainian people. The people of the United States, including proud Ukrainian Americans,

have been honored to partner with Ukraine on this journey. Today we reaffirm that the United States will continue to stand with the Ukrainian people as they protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity, embrace the vision of a strong and united Europe, and deepen their commitment to democracy, anticorruption, and respect for human rights. I offer my best wishes to all the people of Ukraine. On this occasion, we are reminded that even in the most difficult moments, the glory and freedom of Ukraine—and the indomitable spirit of the Ukrainian people—lives on.

Statement on the Colombian Peace Agreement *August 25, 2016*

This is a historic day for the people of Colombia. With the finalizing of a peace agreement between Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the longest running war in the Western Hemisphere is coming to an end. We have witnessed, once again, that a sustained commitment to diplomacy and reconciliation can overcome even the most entrenched conflicts.

This accord is a tribute to the hard work and cooperation of countless Colombian leaders and citizens across parties and administrations who painstakingly laid the groundwork for this milestone. I especially want to commend President Juan Manuel Santos for his courageous leadership during 4 years of difficult negotiations. I, likewise, thank the Government of Cuba for hosting these talks, its coguarantor Norway, and the United States Special Envoy Bernie Aronson for his contributions to the peace process.

Even as we mark the end of an era of war, we recognize that the work of achieving a just

and lasting peace is only beginning. Yet, just as the United States has been Colombia's partner in a time of war, we will be Colombia's partner in waging peace. It is in this spirit that I stood alongside President Santos earlier this year and announced a new chapter in our relationship, Peace Colombia, which will provide a framework to reinforce security gains, reintegrate former combatants into society, and extend opportunity and the rule of law.

For generations, too many Colombians have known only a country ravaged by war. Many around the world have viewed Colombia only as a place of conflict. But as I saw when I visited Colombia 4 years ago, a remarkable transformation has occurred. Thanks to the strength and spirit of the Colombian people, today's Colombia is moving toward a future of optimism and hope. The United States is proud to stand with the Colombian people as they continue on the path to lasting peace and prosperity.