

And about 6 months in, President looks at me, he said: “You know, Joe, you know what surprised me? How we’ve become such good friends.” [*Laughter*] And I said, “Surprised you?” [*Laughter*]

But that is candid Obama—[*laughter*—and it’s real. And, Mr. President, you know as long as there’s a breath in me, I’ll be there for you, my whole family will be, and I know, I know it is reciprocal. I—and I want to thank you all so very, very, very much, all of you, for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Stefani J.A. “Lady Gaga” Germanotta; Pope Francis; Sen. Lindsey O. Graham; and former Secretary of

State Colin L. Powell. Vice President Biden referred to former Sens. Edward E. “Ted” Kaufman and Christopher J. Dodd; Melvyn I. Monzack, managing partner, Monzack Mersky McLaughlin and Browder, P.A.; Amy Gutmann, president, University of Pennsylvania; Sen. Christopher A. Coons; Christine P. Pelosi, chair of the women’s caucus, California Democratic Party; John J. DeGioia, president, Georgetown University; the President’s mother-in-law Marian Robinson and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson and his children Avery and Leslie; and Dennis Assanis, president, University of Delaware. He also referred to his sister Valerie Biden Owens. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citation.

Statement on the United States Trade Enforcement Action Against China and the Administration’s Trade Enforcement Record *January 12, 2017*

America succeeds when our workers and businesses have a fair shot to compete in the global economy. That’s why when other countries cut corners and break the rules on trade, my administration stands up for strong trade enforcement. In fact, since taking office, we’ve overhauled our trade enforcement efforts and dedicated significant new resources to holding our trading partners accountable. We’ve filed more enforcement complaints in the World Trade Organization (WTO) than any other WTO member, and we’ve won every one of those challenges that’s been decided. Today we’re building on our support for American workers and businesses by filing our latest complaint with the WTO against China’s trade practices.

China gives its aluminum industry an unfair advantage through underpriced loans and other illegal Government subsidies. These kinds of policies have disadvantaged American manufacturers and contributed to the global glut in aluminum, steel, and other sectors. We’re taking action to protect the workers—at home and around the world—who are hurt everyday by these policies. That’s what we’ve done since day one. From enhancing fair trade laws and expanding enforcement resources to preventing unfair currency practices and safeguarding intellectual property, our record of forceful and effective trade enforcement on behalf of American businesses and workers has protected American jobs. It’s simple: When the playing field is level, American workers win.

Statement on the Cuban Immigration Policy of the United States *January 12, 2017*

Today the United States is taking important steps forward to normalize relations with Cuba and to bring greater consistency to our immigration policy. The Department of Homeland

Security is ending the so-called “wet-foot/dry-foot” policy, which was put in place more than 20 years ago and was designed for a different era. Effective immediately, Cuban nationals

who attempt to enter the United States illegally and do not qualify for humanitarian relief will be subject to removal, consistent with U.S. law and enforcement priorities. By taking this step, we are treating Cuban migrants the same way we treat migrants from other countries. The Cuban Government has agreed to accept the return of Cuban nationals who have been ordered removed, just as it has been accepting the return of migrants interdicted at sea.

Today the Department of Homeland Security is also ending the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program. The United States and Cuba are working together to combat diseases that endanger the health and lives of our people. By providing preferential treatment to Cuban medical personnel, the medical parole program contradicts those efforts and risks harming the Cuban people. Cuban medical personnel will now be eligible to apply for asy-

lum at U.S. Embassies and consulates around the world, consistent with the procedures for all foreign nationals.

The United States, a land of immigrants, has been enriched by the contributions of Cuban Americans for more than a century. Since I took office, we have put the Cuban American community at the center of our policies. With this change we will continue to welcome Cubans, as we welcome immigrants from other nations, consistent with our laws. During my administration, we worked to improve the lives of the Cuban people—inside of Cuba—by providing them with greater access to resources, information, and connectivity to the wider world. Sustaining that approach is the best way to ensure that Cubans can enjoy prosperity, pursue reforms, and determine their own destiny. As I said in Havana, the future of Cuba should be in the hands of the Cuban people.

Statement on the Designation of National Monuments Honoring Civil Rights History and on the Expansion of National Monuments in Oregon and California

January 12, 2017

Today I am designating new national monuments that preserve critical chapters of our country's history, from the Civil War to the civil rights movement. These monuments preserve the vibrant history of the Reconstruction Era and its role in redefining freedom. They tell the important stories of the citizens who helped launch the civil rights movement in Birmingham and the Freedom Riders whose bravery raised national awareness of segregation and violence. These stories are part of our shared history. From designating Stonewall National Monument, our country's first national monument honoring the LGBT movement, to recognizing the movement for women's equality through the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, I have sought to build a more inclusive National Park System and ensure that our national parks, monuments, and public lands are fully reflective of our Nation's diverse history and culture.

I am also expanding existing areas for some of our country's treasured and historic natural resources in Oregon and California today, including stretches of California's scenic coast and unique wildlife habitat in rugged mountain ranges and forests in Oregon and California. Over the last 8 years, I have sought to work with local communities, Tribal governments, businesses, sportsmen, Members of Congress, and others to protect the most important public lands for the benefit of future generations. Today's actions will help ensure that more of our country's history will be preserved and celebrated and that more of our outdoors will be protected for all to experience and enjoy.

NOTE: The statement referred to Proclamations 9563, 9564, 9565, 9566, and 9567, which are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.