

Remarks by President Obama at the Closing Session of the Nuclear Security Summit

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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT OBAMA

AT CLOSING SESSION OF THE

NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

Washington, D.C.

3:55 P.M. EDT

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Good afternoon, everybody. If we could get started. If everybody could take their seats, please.

Just to summarize where we've been, in the morning session we discussed the extensive and impressive national action steps that many of us have taken, and the collective efforts that we've made to reduce the amount of nuclear material that might be accessible to terrorists around the world.

During lunch, we focused on international institutions. And I was heartened by our collective commitment to ensure that the IAEA, Interpol, the United Nations, and the various coalitions that have formed are properly resourced and supported by various nation states in order for them to be able to carry out the ongoing work that will be required to ensure that the commitments and pledges and practices that we have put into place during the course of these Nuclear Security Summits carry forward.

This afternoon's session turns the focus on the terrorist networks themselves. It tells us the possible consequences of terrorists obtaining and using a weapon of mass destruction. Fortunately, as I said this morning, no terrorist group has yet succeeded in getting their hands on a nuclear device. Our work here will help ensure that we're doing everything possible to prevent that.

This is also an opportunity for our nations to remain united and focused on the most active terrorist network at the moment, and that is ISIL. A majority of the nations here are part of the global coalition against ISIL. A number of our countries have been targeted by ISIL attacks. Just about all of our nations have seen citizens join ISIL in Syria and Iraq. So this is a threat to us all.

In Syria and Iraq, ISIL continues to lose ground. That's the good news. Our coalition continues to take out its leaders, including those planning external terrorist attacks. They are losing their oil infrastructure. They are losing their revenues. Morale is suffering. We believe that the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq has slowed, even as the threat from foreign fighters returning to commit acts of horrific violence remains all too real.

In fact, as ISIL is squeezed in Syria and Iraq, we can anticipate it lashing out elsewhere, as we've seen most recently and tragically in countries from Turkey to Brussels. This means that the sense of urgency that we've shown in destroying ISIL in Iraq and Syria also has to infuse our efforts to prevent attacks around the world.

We need to do even more to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. After the Paris attacks, the United States deployed surge teams to Europe to bolster these efforts, and we'll be deploying additional teams in the near future. We all have a role to play. We're all going to have to do more when it comes to intelligence-sharing. We simply cannot afford to have critical intelligence not being shared as needed -- whether between governments or within governments. And today is an opportunity to explore ways to step up those efforts.

Looking around this room, I see nations that represent the overwhelming majority of humanity -- from different regions, races, religions, cultures. But our people do share common aspirations to live in security and peace and to be free from fear. The fight against ISIL will continue to be difficult, but, together, we are making real progress, and I'm absolutely confident that we will prevail and destroy this vile organization. As compared to ISIL's vision of death and destruction, I believe our nations together offer a hopeful vision focused on what we can build for our people.

With that, what I'd like to do is ask the press to depart. We will then be showing a video that focuses attention on possible scenarios that might emerge with respect to terrorist networks. It will give us a good opportunity to test those areas where we still have work to do, and how we can strengthen our collective efforts against these networks.

So if I could ask the press to depart promptly, please.

END

4:01 P.M. EDT