

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

The President's Weekly Address

November 8, 2014

Hi, everybody. This weekend, I depart for Asia to advance American leadership and promote American jobs in a dynamic region that will be critical to our security and prosperity in the century ahead. The democracies, progress, and growth we see across the Asia-Pacific would have been impossible without America's enduring commitment to that region, especially the service of generations of Americans in uniform. As we approach Veterans Day, we honor them and all those who've served to keep us free and strong.

We salute that greatest generation who freed a continent from fascism and fought across Pacific islands to preserve our way of life. We pay tribute to Americans who defended the people of South Korea, soldiered through the brutal battles of Vietnam, stood up to a tyrant in Desert Storm, and stopped ethnic cleansing in the Balkans.

And we celebrate our newest heroes from the 9/11 generation, our veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. For more than 13 years, we have been at war in Afghanistan. Next month, our combat mission will be over, and America's longest war will come to a responsible end.

But the end of a war is just the beginning of our obligations to those who serve in our name. These men and women will be proud veterans for decades to come, and our service to them has only just begun. So as we welcome our newest veterans home, let's honor them by giving them the thanks and respect they deserve. And let's make sure we're there for their families and children too, because they've also made great sacrifices for America.

Let's honor our veterans by making sure they get the care and benefits they've earned. That means health care that's there for them when they need it. It means continuing to reduce the disabilities claim backlog. And it means giving our wounded warriors all the care and support they need to heal, including mental health care for those with posttraumatic stress or traumatic brain injury. Some of the most moving moments I've experienced as Commander in Chief have been with our wounded warriors. Some have to learn how to walk again, talk again, write their names again. But no matter how hard it is, they never give up. They never quit. And we can't ever quit on them.

Let's honor our veterans by making sure they get their shot at the American Dream that they risked their lives to defend, by helping them find jobs worthy of their skills and talents and making sure the post-9/11 GI bill stays strong so more veterans can earn a college education. When our veterans have the opportunity to succeed, our whole Nation is stronger. And let's work together to end the tragedy of homelessness among veterans once and for all, because anyone who has defended America deserves to live in dignity in America.

Finally, let's honor our veterans by remembering that this isn't just a job for Government, it's a job for every American. We're all keepers of that sacred trust that says, if you put on a uniform and risk your life to keep us safe, we'll do our part for you. We'll make sure you and your family get the support you need. We'll have your backs, just like you had ours.

So this Veterans Day and every day, let's make sure all our veterans know how much we appreciate them. If you see a veteran, go on up and shake their hand. Look them in the eye. Say those words that every veteran deserves to hear: "Welcome home. Thank you. We need you more than ever to help us stay strong and free."

And then, let's come together, as Americans, to make sure we're there for them and their families for all the years of all their lives.

God bless our veterans and their families, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on November 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 8.

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