

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

The President's News Conference With President Macky Sall of Senegal in Dakar, Senegal

June 27, 2013

[At this point, President Sall made remarks in French, which were translated by an interpreter, as follows.]

President Sall. Mr. President, Mr. Barack Obama, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm extremely happy to welcome President Barack Obama for his first trip to Africa since his reelection in November last year.

So, Mr. President, I'd like to once again welcome you to Senegal and wish you a pleasant stay in Senegal. Your stay among us, Mr. President, is a source of pride for the Senegalese population and its Government.

Now, with this visit we are jointly pursuing an age-old tradition, a privileged tradition full of trust between Senegal and the United States of America. I'm extremely happy that you've chosen Senegal to be the first point of entry on this continent after having received me very warmly on the 20th of March in the Oval Office.

President Obama and myself, we have held talks on issues of common interest on the African Continent as well as at the international level. Of course, we discussed bilateral issues and my capacity as the current chairperson of the orientation committee of NEPAD.

I informed the President about our African infrastructure projects as well as a discussion on a bilateral level about the excellent cooperation between our two countries. And I thanked the U.S. for the help in developing Senegal. And we also have a common vision of the main values: freedom, democracy, peaceful coexistence of cultures and religions, and good governance.

On this last issue, Senegal would like to commend the American initiative of Open Government Partnership, which we fully endorse. We are working together to protect and promote all these common shared values for the strengthening of our bilateral cooperation and the continuation of our joint efforts for stability in Africa and the protection of peace and security at the international level.

I would like to commend President Obama's leadership and his will to start a new—give a new impetus to a relationship between Africa and the U.S. U.S.A. are a great country, spearheading progress in all fields for greater prosperity between the African Continent and the U.S. And the African Continent is progressing, is marching ahead with the tremendous potential in terms of natural and human resources.

On both sides, we have a historical opportunity here to open new prospects for relations on the business of complementarity by offering greater opportunities to our youth and by stimulating trade and investments for shared prosperity. Senegal is extremely happy with this new impetus, Mr. President, and I'm ready to pursue our efforts with you in this direction.

I thank you, and I would like to give the floor to you so that you can address the press. Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you very much, President Sall, for your generous words and the very warm welcome that we've received from your delegation. On behalf of myself and Michelle, our two daughters Malia and Sasha, and our entire delegation: It is wonderful to be here in Senegal.

President Sall. Thank you.

President Obama. To all the Senegalese who lined the streets to welcome us: We are deeply touched. We are so grateful for your *teranga*, your hospitality.

I'm making this visit to Africa because, as I've said before, I see this as a moment of great progress and great promise for the continent. It's true that Africa faces great challenges, and meeting these challenges together is a focus of my trip. But all too often the world overlooks the amazing progress that Africa is making, including progress in strengthening democracy. Many African nations have made tremendous strides in improving democratic governance and empowering citizens. Here in West Africa, we see progress in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Niger, in Ghana and here in Senegal.

And that's why I welcomed President Sall to the White House this spring. And that's why I'm beginning my trip here in Dakar. Senegal is one of the most stable democracies in Africa and one of the strongest partners that we have in the region. It's moving in the right direction with reforms to deepen democratic institutions. And as more Africans across this continent stand up and demand governments that are accountable and serve the people, I believe Senegal can be a great example.

I'm told there's a word here, *disso*, which reflects the desire of Senegalese to resolve disagreements through dialogue and not conflict. Senegal has never suffered a military coup. There are free and fair elections, repeated transfers of power, peacefully, a vibrant civil society, a strong press, and dozens of political parties. And I have to say, back in Washington, we have our hands full with just two parties.

[*President Sall spoke in English.*]

President Sall. Yes. Two hundred, sir. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. I don't know how you manage it. [*Laughter*] But after last year's election here, we were inspired by the citizens of Senegal demanding that their votes be respected and that President Sall be sworn in as the democratically elected leader of this nation.

Of course, we all know that democracy is not just what happens on election day, it's also what happens in between elections. So, President Sall, I want to commend you for the ambitious reforms that you're pursuing to strengthen democratic governance: more openness, more transparency, more accountability. I know it's hard, but it's absolutely necessary both politically and economically. History shows that governments that are more open and more responsive to citizens are more effective in delivering basic services. They're also more successful in attracting the trade and investment that creates jobs and lifts people out of poverty.

President Sall, during our discussions, updated me on his reform efforts, including efforts to stamp out corruption. As progress is made, I look forward to seeing Senegal join the Open Government Partnership. And because just as the United States stood with the people of Senegal as you defended your democracy last year, we want to remain your partner for years to come, to show that democracy delivers progress and jobs and justice that people deserve.

With regard to jobs, the President and I discussed the need to increase our trade and make it easier to invest and do business together. On our side, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, also known as AGOA, expires in 2 years, and I'm looking for ways to renew it, but also improve it so that we're generating more jobs and more trade. We also need to do more across this region. So I'm directing my new U.S. Trade Representative, Mike Froman, to finalize a new trade and investment agreement with ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States.

Ultimately, though, growth and progress has to reach more people. We believe in broad-based development and growth, not just for the few, but for the many. And our mission's always been to try to deliver that kind of broad-based growth through our development program. So, as one example, I'm very proud to be here as we mark the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps in Senegal. Today I'm reaffirming that the United States will remain one of Senegal's strongest partners in development, from new roads and bridges, so merchants can get their goods to the market, to new textbooks and schools, including the Internet, so that more students can learn.

Since most people in Senegal, as is true across Africa, work in agriculture, our food security initiative will keep helping farmers harness new seeds and technologies, increase yields and boost incomes. And as President Sall pursues land reforms, we're looking forward to Senegal joining the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which I'll be discussing further tomorrow. We will continue efforts that are shared against HIV and AIDS, which we've—because of those efforts, we've been able to keep infection rates here relatively low. We'll continue distributing the nets that are saving the lives of countless Senegalese from malaria.

And more broadly, I want to thank Senegal for being such a strong partner in regional security. Senegalese peacekeepers have served bravely from Cote d'Ivoire to the Congo. Senegalese are currently helping the people of Mali reclaim their country, and I assured President Sall that American support for that mission will continue. And with Senegal, we support—within Senegal, we support President Sall's determined efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Casamance region.

Finally, I'm very pleased that we're deepening the ties between our peoples, especially young people. I was proud to welcome two Senegalese—both women—to the forum for young African leaders that we hosted in the White House. And in the coming days I'll be announcing an expansion of our efforts to empower more young Africans who want to contribute to their respective countries. I hope that will include young people here in Senegal because we believe in Senegal and we believe in its people. We believe we can make progress together. And we believe in investing in the youth of tomorrow.

So again, President Sall, thank you for your partnership, and thank you for the extraordinary welcome that my family and I have received. Our nation are partners—*nyo far*. And my only—

President Sall. Thank you very much. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. —my only regret on this visit is that I won't be here long enough to take in a match of Senegal's world-famous wrestling. I have to see that. Maybe next time.

President Sall. Next time.

President Obama. So for now, I'll simply say thank you. *Jerejef*.

[President Sall spoke in English.]

President Sall. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And your Wolof is wonderful.
[Laughter]

Now I think we can give the floor to the press. Tijane Barry.

Q. Tijane Barry, journalist at the Radio Television of Senegal. Firstly, on behalf of the national and international media, we would like to welcome Mr. President Obama. My question is for President Macky Sall. Mr. President, how do you describe this visit? And what are the new prospects that this visit opens for Senegal and Africa?

Thank you.

[President Sall responded in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter, as follows.]

President Sall. Well, this visit is extremely important for Senegal and for Africa because it is indeed the visit by the President of the U.S.A. And it's not every day that we have the privilege of having the President of the United States of America on our soil.

This visit is also important, because the—this trip by President Obama will further build trust for the corporate and business environment. And we are convinced that Africa's progress and development and growth through partnership—in the private investment trade and partnership. The importance of his presence, the trust that he has in Senegal and in the future of the continent should enable us to establish a bridge between the U.S.A. and Africa, particularly for the development of private investment.

We do have shared values, such as democracy, freedom, human rights, good governance. Africa has made very important progress on these last aspects over the years. Of course, in the past, Africa did suffer a lot. But for about 10 years or so, during the last decade, this has been a decade towards democratization, and this is a prerequisite for the development of Africa. We have tremendous natural resources. We have a lot of human resources. We need infrastructure to accompany the development of all these resources, but all this in the context of good governance; otherwise, these resources will be in vain.

Now, the presence of President Obama, as he has said, is also meant to give a new contract for AGOA, revisit the conditions which should enable countries like Senegal to do more to better export towards the United States of America. But this has to also do with the relationship between ECOWAS and the U.S. for fast-tracked trade relations.

The U.S. is already intervening through different mechanisms: The Millennium Challenge Corporation is one of the latest, which is doing a lot of things in Senegal with a program of \$542 million, which should allow us to rehabilitate our Highway Number 6 in Casamance, which will lead to giving better access to the region. We have the Ngallenka road for the development of 10,000 hectares to step up agricultural production.

So generally speaking, the Peace Corps, USAID, in short, all are the supporting instruments, which are supporting cooperation, should enable us to further boost the already excellent relations at the political and economic levels. And I'm sure that this visit will give an additional boost to our relationship.

Thank you.

U.S. Supreme Court Ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act/Civil Rights/Former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You called the DOMA ruling a victory for couples everywhere who are seeking equal treatment under the law. But this leaves unanswered questions for couples in States that don't recognize same-sex marriage. And now it's largely up to you. Will you direct the Government to make sure that Federal benefits are extended—like Social Security—to all couples, no matter where they live? And will you comment generally on the historic nature of yesterday's rulings? Also, did you press President Sall to make sure that homosexuality is decriminalized in Senegal?

And, President Sall, may I ask you, sir—thank you, first of all, for your hospitality. You just said that you embrace democracy and freedom. As this country's new President, sir, will you work to decriminalize homosexuality in this country?

And may I also ask both of you, because—

President Obama. How many questions you got there, Jessica [Jessica Yellin, CNN]?

Q. One more. [Laughter] Just one more, sir. Because the world is watching and because President Mandela is in such a fragile condition right now, may I ask both of you just to comment on his legacy and what he means to both of you?

President Obama. Well, first of all, I think the Supreme Court ruling yesterday was not simply a victory for the LGBT community, I think it was a victory for American democracy. I believe at the root of who we are as a people—as Americans—is the basic precept that we are all equal under the law. We believe in basic fairness. And what I think yesterday's ruling signifies is one more step towards ensuring that those basic principles apply to everybody.

When I spoke to Ms. Windsor—83 years old—and I thought about the 40 years of her relationship and her partner, who is now passed, for her to live to see this day, where that relationship was the vehicle whereby more people received their rights and are recognized as a testament to the love and commitment that they have made to each other, that was special. And that's just a microcosm of what it meant for families and their children all across America. So it was a proud day, I think, for America.

Now, as you point out, there are a whole lot of implications that flow from it, because the Supreme Court did not make a blanket ruling that applies nationally, but rather, lifted up the ability of States to recognize the dignity and respect of same-sex marriage; and that the Federal Government couldn't negate the decision by those States. We now have to comb through every Federal statute. And although we hadn't prejudged what the ruling had been, I had asked my White House Counsel to help work with lawyers across every agency in the Federal Government to start getting a sense of what statutes would it—be implicated and what it will mean for us to administratively apply the rule that Federal benefits apply to all married couples.

What's true though is, is that you still have a whole bunch of States that do not recognize it. The Supreme Court continues to leave it up to the States to make these decisions. And we are going to have to go back and do a legal analysis of what that means. It's my personal belief—but I'm speaking now as a President as opposed to as a lawyer—that if you've been married in Massachusetts and you move someplace else, you're still married; and that under Federal law you should be able to obtain the benefits of any lawfully married couple. But again, I'm speaking as a President, not a lawyer.

So we're going to be evaluating all these issues and making sure that we work through them in a systematic and prompt way, because now that the Supreme Court has spoken, it's important that people who deserve these benefits know that they're getting them quickly. And I know that, for example, Chuck Hagel already mentioned some work that the Department of Defense is doing on that front. And I think we're going to be seeing that in all the various agencies.

Now, this topic did not come up in the conversation that I had with President Sall in bilateral meeting, but let me just make a general statement: The issue of gays and lesbians, and how they're treated, has come up and has been controversial in many parts of Africa. So I wanted the African people just to hear what I believe, and that is that every country, every group of people, every religion have different customs, different traditions. And when it comes to people's personal views and their religious faith, et cetera, I think we have to respect the diversity of views that are there.

But when it comes to how the state treats people, how the law treats people, I believe that everybody has to be treated equally. I don't believe in discrimination of any sort. That's my personal view. And I speak as somebody who obviously comes from a country in which there were times where people were not treated equally under the law, and we had to fight long and hard through a civil rights struggle to make sure that happens.

So my basic view is that regardless of race, regardless of religion, regardless of gender, regardless of sexual orientation, when it comes to how the law treats you, how the state treats you—the benefits, the rights and the responsibilities under the law—people should be treated equally. And that's a principle that I think applies universally, and the good news is, it's an easy principle to remember. Every world religion has this basic notion that is embodied in the Golden Rule: You treat people the way you want to be treated. And I think that applies here as well.

Finally, with respect to Mr. Mandela—and by the way, Mr. President, I apologize. Sometimes my press—I notice yours just asked one question; we try to fit in three or four or five questions in there. So—*[laughter]*.

My first act of political activism was when I was at Occidental College as a 19-year-old. I got involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement back in 1979, '80, because I was inspired by what was taking place in South Africa. I think at that time, I didn't necessarily imagine that Nelson Mandela might be released, but I had read his writings and his speeches, and I understood that this was somebody who believed in that basic principle I just talked about—treating people equally—and was willing to sacrifice his life for that belief.

When I was in law school, in 1990, '91, to see Nelson Mandela step forward after 27 years of captivity and not only help usher in democracy and majority rule and one person, one vote in South Africa, but as importantly, for him to say, I embrace my former captors and my former oppressors and believe in one nation and believe in judging people on the basis of their character and not their color, it gave me a sense of what is possible in the world when righteous people—when people of good will—work together on behalf of a larger cause.

So obviously, our thoughts and prayers right now are with the people of South Africa and, more specifically, the Mandela family. I will be traveling there over the next several days, after I leave Senegal. I've had the privilege of meeting Madiba and speaking to him. And he's a personal hero, but I don't think I'm unique in that regard. I think he's a hero for the world.

And if and when he passes from this place, one thing I think we'll all know is that his legacy is one that will linger on throughout the ages.

President Sall. Thank you very much. I will leave the floor to you and then react maybe. Alessane.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. Alessane Samba Diop, director of RFM. I have a question regarding the subregional context. President Barack Obama has come here at a time when the situation is quite volatile. I'd like to know if he has discussed the subregional context with you.

And the other question is the following: The U.S. is not intervening militarily, but they do have a special envoy for Casamance. I'd like to know if the peace process in Casamance has been discussed by the two Presidents. Thank you.

President Sall. Mr. President. Following your own statement, I'd like to come back to two issues before I address the question raised by Mr. Alessane Samba Diop. Firstly, regarding Mandela, I think we are all extremely sad and pained to see Madima—Madiba in this situation of health for the past 3 weeks. My hope was to see him be a centenarian. And—but I think Mandela has—is an example for the whole world. And for us, as political leaders, we need to take inspiration from his humility and his capacity of sacrifice and self-denial, but also from his greatness and forgiveness that he has given us as reference.

As President Obama said, he is more than an idol for all of us. When we all pray—we all prayed for him to recover his freedom. But even now, and after he passes, we should always draw inspiration from his thoughts, because South Africa is a rainbow nation even now. And we hope that leaders all over the world will learn from his example.

Now, on the issue of homosexuality, Mr. President, you did make a long development on this issue. But you said something very important, general principles which all nations could share, and that is the respect for the human being and nondiscrimination. But these issues are all societal issues, basically, and we cannot have a standard model which is applicable to all nations, all countries. You said it, we all have different cultures. We have different religions. We have different traditions. And even in countries where this has been decriminalized and homosexual marriage is allowed, people don't share the same views.

Senegal, as far as it is concerned, is a very tolerant country which does not discriminate in terms of inalienable rights of the human being. We don't tell anybody that he will not be recruited because he is gay or he will not access a job because his sexual orientation is different. But we are still not ready to decriminalize homosexuality. I've already said it in the past, in our cabinet meeting, it is Senegal's option, at least for the time being, while we have respect for the rights of homosexuals—but for the time being, we are still not ready to change the law.

But of course, this does not mean that we are all homophobic. But the society has to absorb these issues. It has to take time to digest them without bringing pressure to bear upon them, on such issues. It is just like the capital punishment. I mean, do you know, in our country, we have abolished it for many years. In other countries, it is still the order of the day, because the situation in the country requires it. And we do respect the choice of each country. But please be assured that Senegal is a country of freedom, and homosexuals are not being prosecuted—persecuted. But we must also show respect for the values and choices of the other Senegalese people.

And we are discussing issues such as adoption of children. And this is a serious topic for debate within the Government. The Parliament will be taking over shortly. So these are issues that will be addressed by the society based on the progress of the mentalities and on what people believe is acceptable or unacceptable. That's what I wanted to say on that issue.

Now to come back very quickly to the subregional context for the crisis ongoing in Mali. Of course, we discussed it at length. And I thanked President Obama for the support offered by the U.S. You know that today it is the U.S. who are giving almost all the food and fuel used by MINUSMA, that is, the United Nations mission for Mali. And they're also intervening to assist us with the logistics after the French response—which we of course approved—with the Serval Operation.

We also worked to develop a model of cooperation. Senegal does cooperate with the U.S. from the military standpoint. And given the constant global threat of terrorism, as well as other scourges such as drugs in the subregion, human beings trafficking, circulation of weapons and piracy, we have decided to pursue our cooperation in all these fields. And our governments and our administrations will continue these consultations in order to arrive at greater efficiency for African forces, because I think it's time for Africa to stand up and address its own issues. And for this, we do need the American support in terms of capacity, in terms of equipment, in terms of training.

But we will be ready to cope for this and Senegal will continue to supply troops for peacekeeping in the world. We are present in more than five countries with more than 2,000 peacekeeping soldiers. And we can build up these forces if required.

And to conclude, of course, Casamance, we did discuss it. I also thanked him for the interest shown by the U.S. in solving this conflict. He has encouraged me in the efforts to obtain peace. And I've also asked for the contribution of the U.S. in development projects, because one of the responses to this crisis is to give an economic perspective. We need reconciliation, of course, to start with. We need reintegration. We need development—sustainable development—in Casamance. On all these issues, we did have a discussion. And I thank the President for the interest he has in Senegal and in Casamance. Thank you.

President Obama. Major [Major Garrett, CBS].

U.S. Supreme Court Ruling on the Voting Rights Act/Former National Security Agency Contractor Edward J. Snowden/President Obama's Visit to Africa

Q. Morning, Mr. President. Morning, President Sall. Thank you for your hospitality. It's a pleasure to be in your country. President Obama, two subjects: First of all, picking up on your comments about equal rights under the law, could you give us your gut, your visceral reaction to the Supreme Court's decision in the voting rights case? Explain legislative remedy you will pursue and the pace of that?

Secondly, Edward Snowden, there have been a lot of developments. First of all, there's word that he might be given safe passage to Ecuador. Mr. President, will you use U.S. military assets to in any way intercept Mr. Snowden should he at the—some point in the future leave Russia to try to find safe passage in another country? Have you spoken to President Xi of China, President Putin about this personally, and if not, why not? And how frustrated or angry are you, sir, that China's defiance and Russia's indifference have vastly complicated the pursuit of Mr. Snowden and turned it into what some people regard as kind of an international game of cat-and-mouse that's almost farcical? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, let me take the issue of voting rights first. The Voting Rights Act, sections 2, 4, 5, were the cornerstones of providing political power to African Americans that then led to a whole range of other steps to make America more just and more equal. It was the cornerstone and the culmination of years of struggle: blood, sweat, tears, in some cases, deaths.

I might not be here as President had it not been for those who courageously helped to pass the Voting Rights Act. I think that the Supreme Court made a mistake in its ruling, but that decision is now here. I think the Supreme Court didn't recognize the degree to which voter suppression is still a problem around the country and that it makes sense for us to put in place mechanisms to check practices and procedures that may make it harder for people to vote in those areas where there's been a history in the past of discrimination.

And part of the reason, Major, is because, even though lawsuits can still be filed now if there's discrimination, if you don't have the structure of section 4 and section 5 in place ahead of time, the election may be over by the time lawsuits are filed or a court rules. And oftentimes, it may be too late.

Having said that, the Supreme Court has ruled, and Congress can't overturn this particular aspect of their ruling. The good news is that there are other potential remedies, and the most important one is to simply make sure that everybody around the country can vote and that everywhere around the country we're not seeing 7-hour lines, around the country, we're not seeing mechanisms put in place to make it harder for people to vote, but rather, we should have mechanisms that make it easier to vote. And that is within Congress's power. Congress doesn't have to target or identify a particular jurisdiction. What it can do now is to say, regardless of where you are—regardless of where you live—there are going to be certain rules that apply to elections.

And we—as you know, right after the election when we had already seen some of these problems, I assigned a close adviser of mine, Bob Bauer, to work with a close adviser of Mitt Romney's. They're going to be issuing a report in terms of how we can start making it easier for folks to vote. I recognize that whenever you get into voting rights issues, inevitably some partisan thoughts cross people's minds about who is it going to advantage or disadvantage.

But in the wake of this Supreme Court ruling, surely we can all agree that people should be able to vote, they shouldn't be restricted from voting because—or have to jump through a whole bunch of hoops in order to vote; and that there should be some uniformity in terms of how that right is upheld. It's the cornerstone of our democracy. It's what makes our democracy work. And I'm looking forward to working with both Democrats and Republicans in a nonpartisan basis to make sure that if you're a citizen of the United States of America, you can vote without a whole bunch of barriers, regardless of your race or your political leaning. So that's on the voting rights issue.

With respect to Mr. Snowden, we have issued, through our Justice Department, very clear requests to both, initially, Hong Kong, and then Russia, that we seek the extradition of Mr. Snowden. And we are going through the regular legal channels that are involved when we try to extradite somebody. I have not called President Xi personally or President Putin personally. And the reason is because, number one, I shouldn't have to. This is something that routinely is dealt with between law enforcement officials in various countries. And this is not exceptional from a legal perspective.

Number two, we've got a whole lot of business that we do with China and Russia. And I'm not going to have one case of a suspect who we're trying to extradite suddenly being elevated to

the point where I've got to start doing wheeling and dealing and trading on a whole host of other issues simply to get a guy extradited so that he can face the justice system here in the United States.

Now, I get why it's a fascinating story from a press perspective. And I'm sure there will be a made-for-TV movie somewhere down the line. But in terms of U.S. interests, the damage was done with respect to the initial leaks. And what I'm really focused on is making sure, number one, that we are doing everything we can to prevent the kind of thing that happened at the NSA from happening again, because we don't know right now what Mr. Snowden's motives were except for those things that he said publicly. And I don't want to prejudge the case, but it does show some pretty significant vulnerabilities over at the NSA that we've got to solve. That's number one.

Number two, I'm focused on making sure that we have a healthy, effective debate in the United States about how we balance our security and our privacy concerns, because these programs, which I believe make America safe—help make America safe, and that I believe draw the appropriate balance, right now are generating a lot of questions in the press and in the American public. And I want to make sure that everybody—Congress, opinion leaders, and our government officials—feel confident that the laws are being obeyed, that there's strong oversight and that the American people don't have a Big Brother who is snooping into their business. I'm confident of that, but I want to make sure everybody is confident of that. And so I think we have to have a strong public debate to make that happen.

So I am interested in making sure that the rules of extradition are obeyed. Now, we don't have an extradition treaty with Russia, which makes it more complicated. You don't have to have an extradition treaty, though, to resolve some of these issues. There have been some useful conversations that have taken place between the United States Government and the Russian Government. And my continued expectation is that Russia, or other countries that have talked about potentially providing Mr. Snowden asylum, recognize that they are part of an international community, and that they should be abiding by international law. And we'll continue to press them as hard as we can to make sure that they do so——

Q. Mr. President——

President Obama. But let me—one last thing, because you asked a final question: No, I'm not going to be scrambling jets to get a 29-year-old hacker.

Q. Do you believe that all the damage that he can do has been done by Mr. Snowden? Is that what you're saying, Mr. President?

President Obama. What I'm——

Q. We——

President Obama. What I'm saying is, is that he has those documents. He has released some of them. Not all of them have been released. The damage that's been done essentially goes to the fact of some of these programs. And we don't yet know what other documents he may try to dribble in—out there.

On the other hand, what I'm also confident about is, is that the way we run these programs abides by the laws that were passed by Congress, the oversight of the FISA courts. And we are trying to declassify as much as possible so that the American people and our international partners feel confidence about how we operate in this regard.

I continue to be concerned about the other documents that he may have. That's part of the reason why we'd like to have Mr. Snowden in custody. But what I think we're going to continue to do is to make sure that we are following the various channels that are well established and the rules that are well established to try to get this thing done.

In the meantime, we've got other business to do. For example, we're here in Africa, and I don't want people to forget why we're here.

President Sall. Right.

President Obama. The fact of the matter is, is that Africa oftentimes is not focused on by our press and our leadership back home unless there's a crisis. And part of the reason why we want to focus here, starting in Senegal, is to make sure people understand there is enormous potential here. Six of the ten fastest growing economies in the world are happening right here in Africa. You talk about President Xi. China is paying a lot of attention to Africa; Brazil, Turkey, India are heavily invested in trying to expand trade and commerce with Africa. We have economic and security interests that are critical. We're seeing countries like Senegal that are—have sustained democracy and have sustained peace for many years, who want to partner with us, who are making sacrifices in places like Mali to maintain regional stability.

And so I just want to make sure that we don't lose focus here. The reason I came to Africa is because Africa is rising. And it is in the United States interests—not simply in Africa's interests—that the United States don't miss the opportunity to deepen and broaden the partnerships and potential here. This is going to be a continent that is on the move. It is young. It is vibrant and full of energy. And there's a reason why a lot of other countries around the world are spending a lot of time here.

We historically have been an enormous provider of development aid to Africa, food, medicine. But what I want us to do is to have a shift in paradigm, where we start focusing on trade, development, partnerships where we see ourselves as benefiting and not simply giving to—in the relationship with Africa. And I think that's what people like President Sall are looking forward to. All right.

Thank you very much. That was a very long answer.

Moderator. Yes, the press conference is——

The President. But these are big questions you guys are asking.

President Sall. Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you very much for being here. We wish you a good stay. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11 a.m. at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, the President referred to Maimouna Ndour Ep Faye and Aissatou Padane, participants in the White House Young African Leaders Forum held in August 2010; Edith Windsor, defendant, *United States v. Windsor*; former White House Counsel Robert F. Bauer and Benjamin L. Ginsberg, partner, Patton Boggs LLP, in their capacity as Cochairs of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration; and 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. President Sall referred to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). President Sall and some reporters spoke in French, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences :: Senegal, President Sall.

Locations: Dakar, Senegal.

Names: Bauer, Robert F.; Froman, Michael B.; Ginsberg, Benjamin L.; Hagel, Charles T.; Mandela, Nelson R.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Putin, Vladimir V.; Romney, W. Mitt; Ruemmler, Kathryn H.; Sall, Macky; Snowden, Edward J.; Windsor, Edith; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Africa : African Union :: Peacekeeping efforts ; Africa : Democracy efforts; Africa : Economic growth and development; Africa : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, status; Africa : Security cooperation with U.S.; Africa : Trade with U.S.; Africa : U.S. assistance; China : President; China : Relations with U.S.; Civil rights : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality; Defense and national security : Classified national security information; Defense and national security : Electronic surveillance program; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Developing countries : Food security, strengthening efforts; Elections : Election Administration, President's Commission on; Elections : Voter participation; Elections : Voting Rights Act; Foreign Policy, U.S. : Open government and transparency, promotion efforts; HIV/AIDS : International prevention and treatment efforts; Mali : Political unrest and violence; Open Government Partnership; Peace Corps, U.S.; Russia : President; Russia : Relations with U.S.; Security Agency, National; Senegal : Democracy efforts; Senegal : President; Senegal : President Obama's visit; Senegal : Relations with U.S.; Senegal : U.S. assistance; Trade Representative, U.S. "; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: White House Counsel.

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