

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**Remarks During a Teleconference Call With Rabbis on the Observance of Rosh Hashanah**

*September 26, 2016*

Well, thank you so much, Rabbi, for the warm introduction. *L'Shanah Tovah* to everybody. Thanks for taking time to join this call. I know it's a busy and important time. I couldn't be more grateful to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Rabbinical Assembly, the Rabbinical Council of America, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Assembly for cosponsoring this call. And special thanks to Rabbi Jonah Pesner and Barbara Weinstein from the Religious Action Center for coordinating today's conversation.

As Rabbi Matanky noted, Rosh Hashanah is a time for reflection, and I'm not exempt from that. So, looking back on the last 8 years, I'm both proud of what we've accomplished together, but also mindful of the work we have before us.

When it comes to the unshakeable commitment to Israel's security, we've taken a clear stand, and the recent signing of the memorandum of understanding constitutes the single largest pledge of military assistance in U.S. history to any country, totaling \$38 billion over 10 years.

I made a commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and because of our principled diplomacy, every pathway to a nuclear weapon is now closed off. Iran has dismantled two-thirds of its installed centrifuges, shipped out 98 percent of its enriched uranium, rendered its plutonium reactor core unusable, and adopted the most comprehensive nuclear inspection ever.

On the global fight against anti-Semitism, we've worked in partnership with Israel and other countries to take a lead role in organizing the first ever U.N. General Assembly meeting to combat anti-Semitism last year.

And so on these issues and many others we have worked incredibly closely with many of you, allocating millions in assistance for Holocaust survivors, and ensuring that the U.N. finally recognized Yom Kippur as an official holiday, and more broadly, working to rebuild a sinking economy, so that we've cut the unemployment rate by more than half, provided health care to 20 million people who didn't have it before, ramped up our production of clean energy, signed a historic Paris Agreement that, hopefully, will curb the accelerating speed at which our planet is warming and could threaten the future of our children and our grandchildren.

Of course, we've still got a lot of work to do: on the refugee crisis, on criminal justice reform, reducing violence, and creating a political culture in this country that's a little more functional. But a new year brings new hope, and the community represented on this phone call has always known what it means to stand up for the less fortunate, the stranger, the immigrant, the refugee. And so I'm confident that we can stand together and make sure that as we pass the baton to the next administration that we're going to be able to build on the enormous progress that we've already made.

And I just want to reemphasize how grateful I am to all of you, not just for the work that the various associations and assemblies and congregations have had on policy issues, but just as importantly, or more importantly, the work that you do in your respective communities every single day to help those in need and to help lift up the values that helped to build this country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:59 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Leonard Matanky, honorary president, Rabbinical Council of America; and Jonah Dov Pesner, director, and Barbara Weinstein, associate director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Rosh Hashanah, teleconference call with rabbis.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Matanky, Leonard; Pesner, Jonah Dov; Weinstein, Barbara.

*Subjects:* Civil rights : Minorities :: Anti-Semitism; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: U.S. production; Environment : Climate change; Environment : Paris Agreement; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Holidays and special observances : Yom Kippur; Holidays and special observances :Rosh Hashanah; Iran : Nuclear program, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; Israel : Memorandum of understanding with U.S.; Israel : Relations with U.S.; Israel : Security cooperation with U.S.; Law enforcement and crime : Criminal justice system, reform efforts; Refugees and global migrants : Humanitarian situation; United Nations : General Assembly.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201600631.