

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**The President's News Conference With President Mauricio Macri of Argentina in Buenos Aires, Argentina**

*March 23, 2016*

*President Macri.* Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. And welcome, Mr. President—dear Mr. President. We are very happy to have you visiting with your whole family. And I would like to take a minute to share with you this grief all of us around the world have felt in the face of this new cruel and devastating attack. I would like to convey my solidarity to the families of the victims. And once again, it's a good opportunity to reflect with you on the fact that fanaticism brings intolerance, aggression, and violence, which leads to nowhere. So Argentina once again condemns this kind of terrorist attack, which we deeply regret.

But allow me to say once again that this visit, Mr. President, has a special meaning for us. We see it as a gesture of affection, friendship, at a time when Argentina is embarking on a—towards a new horizon and is in the process of changing. We feel that our countries share profound values in common: respect for human rights, for individual freedoms, for democracy, for justice, and for peace.

And I feel that with you I also share a view on the 21st century, which presents challenges and opportunities. This is a century of the society of knowledge, of the development of science and technology, of innovation, entrepreneurship. That is what will clearly allow us to get the best jobs for our people.

And at this point, I would like to stress, Mr. President, your own leadership, which has been very inspiring for most leaders. You emerged proposing major changes, and you showed they were possible; that by being bold and with conviction you could challenge the status quo. And you achieved just this in your country and around the world. And that was also a path of inspiration for what our dear country is now going through. So thank you very much for that source of inspiration.

I would like to briefly review some of the many things we have agreed on over the course of these weeks of work, which led up to this visit. The first one, consistent with the pillar of the commitments I have entered into with my teams, we want Argentina to have zero poverty. And we know that first pillars are education and work. So the first agreement we signed seeks to boost exchanges in scholarships and teacher training, deepening work and development in science and technology.

And as regards the creation of work, which is something we touched upon this morning too, let me stress the importance of increasing trade between our two countries. Argentina has a lot to offer, and right now it has a very low level of trade exchange with the United States. It is very important for us to work together to enhance investments by your companies in Argentina, and also encouraging the development of SMEs, which are the main generators of work. There, again, I would like to congratulate you, because for 72 consecutive months, I'm told, you have been creating work in your country. And I hope Argentina is embarking upon a similar cycle as part of which will permanently create work for our people to live better.

The other area we are engaged to working in together, which is also the second axis or pillar for our Government, is dealing with and defeating drug trafficking. I mentioned this

morning that, in the past decade, drug trafficking has advanced a lot in our country. So we are very happy to be able to start working together on that front to exchange information, technology, training, and to really fight a relentless battle against organized crime and money laundering.

Also, within this framework of dialogue, respect, and cooperation, which I would like to thank you for, is that only hours away from commemorating the anniversary of the military coup that led to the consolidation of the darkest chapter in our history. At our request, which was to have the files related to that violent decade in Argentina declassified, you agreed to this. And we are very thankful for that gesture. We all need, and we are actually entitled to know what the truth is. And for the Argentine people, that has been a very clear indication that if we engage in dialogue with other countries, and do so seriously and respectfully, other countries will quickly respond and cooperate with our requests.

And finally, I would like to stress another core area of our discussions, as part of which you've also shown great leadership, very significant leadership, which has to do with the defense and protection of our environment: the fight against climate change.

The progress that has been seen in terms of disseminating renewable energies and boosting them, this is something Argentina is also joining. And I deeply believe in this; I told you that. As mayor of the city, I learned about the importance of the green agenda, and now I'm committed to make sure that our country also leads in the fight against climate change in the 21st century.

I would like to end where I started, by thanking you, Mr. President, for your visit, say that I believe this is the beginning of a new phase of mature, intelligent, constructive relations in which the only concern for us both is to improve the quality of life of our people. And I'm sure that by working together we'll achieve this.

Thank you very much. And please feel at home.

*President Obama. Buenas tardes*—good afternoon. It is wonderful to be in Argentina for the first time. And I want to thank the people of Argentina and President Macri and his team for hosting not only myself, but also my family to this beautiful city.

As the President indicated, we just had an excellent conversation. And I can tell you that President Macri is a man in a hurry. [*Laughter*] I'm impressed because he has moved rapidly on so many of the reforms that he promised: to create more sustainable and inclusive economic growth and to reconnect Argentina with the global economy and the world community. And today, in a show of confidence in Argentina's new direction, many U.S businesses are announcing tens of millions of dollars in new investment here in Argentina, which can be part of the broader package of investment that can lead to new jobs and economic growth here in this country.

And what President Macri and his team have achieved in such a short time is a testimony not only to his remarkable energy, but also the willingness of people from different parties to work together. And that is impressive given the history of political polarization inside of Argentina. And that's something I know something about, political polarization. [*Laughter*] But I've told him and his team that the United States stands ready to work with Argentina through this historic transition in any way that we can, in any way that we believe—and you believe—will be helpful.

And it's not just businesses that are taking note of the changes underway here in Buenos Aires. The world has noticed as well. Under President Macri, Argentina is reassuming its traditional leadership role in the region and around the world. And on a range of areas, we discussed the ways in which the United States and Argentina can be strong global partners to promote the universal values and interests that we share.

### *Terrorist Attacks in Brussels, Belgium*

We share a commitment to freedom and security at home and around the world. And today the people of the United States and Argentina stand with the Belgian people and express our extraordinary sorrow for the losses that they've experienced. We understand the pain they feel viscerally because our countries, as well, have known the scourge of terrorism, and we've seen our own citizens impacted by this kinds of senseless, vicious violence.

As I told Belgium's Prime Minister yesterday, the United States will continue to offer any assistance that we can to help investigate these attacks and bring attackers to justice. We will also continue to go after ISIL aggressively until it is removed from Syria and removed from Iraq and is finally destroyed. The world has to be united against terrorism. And we can—and we will—defeat those who threaten the safety and security not only of our own people, but of people all around the world. So that's a top priority of ours, and I know that President Macri shares those beliefs.

### *Argentina-U.S. Relations*

That's one of the reasons why President Macri and I agreed to work together to disrupt terrorism, to do more to choke off the terrorist financing mechanisms that are in place, and to keep our people safe when they travel. U.S. Federal agencies will lend their support to Argentina's counterterrorism efforts. And we're also supportive of President Macri's intention to return to Argentina's traditional role as a significant contributor to peacekeeping missions, including by supporting U.N. efforts to protect vulnerable populations. And the United States is very proud to support this effort through training and equipment.

President Macri has also committed Argentina to help address the Syrian refugee crisis. And I hope that inspires other nations to do the same. And I'm very encouraged by his efforts to combat drug trafficking, reduce organized crime, and to make Argentina's streets safer. These are all areas where I think we can be very effective partners.

The United States and Argentina also share a commitment to protecting this planet for our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. President Macri showed me pictures of his wonderful children, including the little one—[laughter]—who I understand was a Facebook sensation—[laughter]—and I can see why. So we want to make sure that she, just like my daughters and future grandchildren, that they've got the beauty of an Argentina or United States that has not been irreversibly impacted by climate change.

President Macri's support for the Paris Agreement was critical to its success. His commitment to sign the agreement and pursue its ratification this year will be critical to bringing it into force. Argentina has set impressive targets for producing clean energy, and they plan ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions. And because we have experience—since I came into office, tripling the amount of energy we get from wind and increasing the amount of energy that we get from solar power 20 times, and the work that we've done on shale oil and gas—we are confident that we can be effective partners.

And I pledged to President Macri that we would provide any technical assistance that he thought would be useful in developing the incredible resources and clean energy strategies that he's interested in pursuing here in Argentina.

We also share a commitment to global health security. We've agreed to work together on our response to the Zika virus, which is obviously affecting so many in this hemisphere. We agreed to support the broader Global Health Security Agenda, including working together to improve capacity for vulnerable nations, because in a world that's interconnected, if there are diseases that are developing even in remote villages in Africa or Asia, because of global travel, ultimately, they could be a significant threat to our populations. We can't pretend that somehow it's just their problem; it is our problem as well. And we're going to work together to improve our capacity to detect and respond to and ultimately prevent the threat of new diseases.

It's also gratifying to see Argentina champion our shared commitment to human rights. I hope we'll work together to strengthen the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Human Rights System, to promote civil liberties, independent judiciaries, government transparency and accountability throughout the hemisphere. I know this has been an area of great emphasis for President Macri.

And finally, after I leave Casa Rosada today, I'll visit the Metropolitan Cathedral to lay a wreath at the tomb of José de San Martín and to visit the moving memorial to the horrific bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center almost 22 years ago. I told President Macri that the United States offers whatever help we can to finally hold these attackers accountable. And we will, just to reiterate, do the exact same thing in going after those who carried out those terrible attacks in Belgium.

I do recognize that this week marks the 40th anniversary of the military coup. And tomorrow, to underscore our shared commitment to human rights, I'll visit a memorial to the victims of the Argentinian military dictatorship and recognize Argentina's historic and continuing efforts to make things right, to make sure that we acknowledge the incredible heroism and courage of those who stood up against these human rights violations.

And to prove that this is more than just a symbolic gesture on my part, as President Macri indicated, I'm launching a new effort to open up additional documents from that dark period. We previously declassified thousands of records from that era, but for the first time, now we'll declassify military and intelligence records as well. On this anniversary and beyond, we are absolutely determined to do our part as Argentina continues to heal and move forward as one nation. And I hope this gesture also helps to rebuild trust that may have been lost between our two countries.

And that's a principal message that I have not only for Argentina, but for the entire hemisphere. I obviously came here from Cuba. We have put a great emphasis on making sure that some of the ideologies, the disputes of the past, that they are frankly acknowledged, but that we also are able to look to the future and not just behind us. And that's why this visit for me is so personally important. It's also important because I've been a big fan of Argentinian culture. When I was in college, I read a lot of Argentinian literature. And I am proud to announce that I just tried *mate* for the first time. [Laughter] Because when I was in college, I would read Borges or Cortázar, these people, and they were drinking *mate*. And I didn't know what this was. [Laughter]

So I knew that when I finally arrived in Buenos Aires, I would try some. And I just had some, and it was quite good. [*Laughter*] So I may take some home with me when I go back to the United States. I don't know what kind of import and export controls I may be violating, but on Air Force One, I can usually do what I want.

So thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you.

[*At this point, President Macri spoke in English as follows.*]

*President Macri.* Are we ready for the questions?

*President Obama.* Yes.

*Ivan Pavlovsky, Press Secretary to President Macri.* So next, we'll begin the planned press conference.

First, for Argentina, Liliana Franco, from *Ambito Financiero* newspaper, will ask a question.

*Argentina-U.S. Relations/Argentina-U.S. Trade Relations/Argentina's Foreign Debt*

[*The reporter spoke briefly in English as follows.*]

Q. Welcome to Argentina. I will make my questions in Spanish because I am in Argentina, sorry.

[*The reporter spoke in Spanish, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Q. The first question I'd like to ask of both Presidents: Did you talk about a free trade agreement between the United States and MERCOSUR? And for President Obama, in particular, what is the role you assign to President Macri, especially considering the serious situation Brazil is currently going through? And how do you view the current negotiation between Argentina and the holdouts, or the way we call them here, the "vulture funds"? Thank you very much.

*President Macri.* So we have begun to look at ways to open up both agendas. This is a road that is now starting. And I told President Obama that we are exporting less than 1 percent of our agri-industrial exports, which means that there is a lot of room for growth as part of a path on which we must first consolidate MERCOSUR and then think about a broader free trade agreement.

But clearly, what we both feel is that we have enormous room for joint work after many years of almost nonexistent relations. A lot of opportunities are opening up, always with the same goal in mind, which is to create work for the Argentines and the Americans.

*President Obama.* As I said in my initial statement, we have been enormously impressed by the work that President Macri has already done in his first hundred days. And we seek good relations with all the countries in the hemisphere. But obviously, Argentina, historically as one of the most powerful, largest countries in the hemisphere, needs to be a critical partner with us in order for us to not only help our own people, but also to help promote prosperity and peace and opportunity in the region as a whole.

And I am absolutely confident that given President Macri's interest in transparency, accountability, economic reform here in Argentina, that he's setting an example for other countries in the hemisphere. And his engagement and willingness to have frank and

constructive relations and conversations with the world community on critical multilateral issues like climate change, I think, promises to heighten Argentina's influence on the world stage in settings like the G-20.

So I am saddened that I'm only going to have 9 months of overlap with him. He's at the beginning of his administration. I'm coming to the end of mine. But what we can do is to start on an effective path that I think will sustain itself into the future.

Trade is an example of an area where we've already organized a working group between our delegations. They're going to identify all the areas where currently there are barriers that have impeded progress in our trading relationship. And we will systematically work through those. Organizing an entire free trade agreement may be at the end of the process. I think at the beginning, right now, there's a lot of underbrush, a lot of unnecessary trade irritants and commercial irritants that can be cleared away administratively. And that's some of the work that we intend to do right away.

You had a—was there a second part of the question?

[*The reporter spoke in English as follows.*]

Q. [*Inaudible*—holdouts, how you see them?

*President Obama.* So with respect to the holdouts and the bondholders, this is working its way through the court system. And I know that President Macri has also initiated a proposal that's being considered by your Parliament. I have to be careful not to comment on the issue because of the nature of our legal system. These are judges typically that I appoint, and so in order for them to remain impartial, if there's a pending case, I do not talk about it publicly.

What I can say is that the constructive approach that President Macri has taken, I think, has opened up the possibility of a resolution. And a resolution on this issue will stabilize Argentina's financial relationship internationally in a way that can accelerate many of the other issues that are of great concern.

To some degree, this is viewed as high finance, and so ordinary people say, why does this matter? But if you're talking about foreign investment, if you're talking about trade, if you're talking about all the things that ultimately matter to ordinary people because they produce jobs and they produce economic development and provide more revenue in order to reinvest in education or science and technology, that requires the kind of financial stability that is so important.

And look, I've been through this. When I came into office in 2008, the world financial system was going down the toilet, as we say. [*Laughter*] And we had to take a lot of efforts and make difficult choices. And they weren't always popular at the time.

But because of the steps that we took, our banks recovered faster than European banks, for example. Our economy began to recover faster. We started producing more jobs. So sometimes, short-term pain and taking decisive action early is the right thing to do, rather than putting it off to *mañana* and then you end up having a perpetual set of problems and you never restore the kind of stability and trust that's necessary.

*White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest.* The first question from the U.S. delegation will come from Josh Lederman with the Associated Press.

*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy/Republican Presidential Candidate Sen. R. Edward "Ted" Cruz*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've resisted calls to alter your strategy for fighting the Islamic State, and you've said that your critics aren't offering any better ideas. But the attacks keep happening. Did Brussels change anything for you? And if not, would you like to—do you think that Americans should see more attacks as being inevitable? And what would you say that it says about the state of our debate on this when you have a major Presidential candidate calling for surveillance of Muslim American communities?

And, President Macri, if I may, you both noted that the U.S. has agreed to release more documents about the "dirty war." What do you expect that those documents will reveal about America's role in this painful chapter in your country's history?

*President Obama.* Josh, I think it is important to recognize that this is my number-one priority. I've got a lot of things on my plate. But my top priority is to defeat ISIL and to eliminate the scourge of this barbaric terrorism that's been taking place around the world. And we see high-profile attacks in Europe, but they're also killing Muslims throughout the Middle East, people who are innocent, people who are guilty only of worshipping Islam in a different way than this organization. They are poisoning the minds of young people everywhere. Not just in Europe, but in the United States and undoubtedly in Argentina, people are looking on these websites.

So there's no more important item on my agenda than going after them and defeating them. The issue is, how do we do it in an intelligent way? And our approach has been continuously to adjust to see what works and what doesn't. What has been working is the airstrikes that we're taking on their leadership, on their infrastructure, on their financial systems. What has been working is special operators partnering with Iraqi security forces and going after leadership networks and couriers and disrupting the connection between their bases in Raqqa and their bases in Mosul.

We've recovered—taken away from ISIL about 40 percent of their territory. And ISIL's leadership has been hunkered down, and we are going to continue to press on them until we are—we have driven them out of their strongholds and until they're destroyed. While we are doing that, we're also extraordinarily vigilant about preventing attacks in our homeland and working with our allies to prevent attacks in places like Europe.

But as I've said before, this is difficult work. It's not because we don't have the best and the brightest working on it. It's not because we are not taking the threat seriously. It is because it's challenging to find, identify very small groups of people who are willing to die themselves and can walk into a crowd and detonate a bomb. And my charge to my team is to find every strategy possible to successfully reduce the risk of such terrorist attacks, even as we go after their beating heart in places like Iraq and Syria.

And as our strategy evolves and we see additional opportunities, we will go after it. But what we don't do, and what we should not do, is take approaches that are going to be counterproductive. So when I hear somebody saying we should carpet bomb Iraq or Syria, not only is that inhumane, not only is that contrary to our values, but that would likely be an extraordinary mechanism for ISIL to recruit more people willing to die and explode bombs in an airport or in a metro station. That's not a smart strategy.

As far as what some candidates have said, I think I've been very clear on this. One of the great strengths of the United States, and part of the reason why we have not seen more attacks in the United States, is we have an extraordinarily successful, patriotic, integrated Muslim American community. They do not feel ghettoized; they do not feel isolated. Their children are our children's friends, going to the same schools. They are our colleagues in our workplaces. They are our men and women in uniform fighting for our freedom. And so any approach that would single them out or target them for discrimination is not only wrong and un-American, but it also would be counterproductive, because it would reduce the strength, the antibodies that we have to resist terrorism.

As far as the notion of having surveillance of neighborhoods where Muslims are present, I just left a country that engages in that kind of neighborhood surveillance, which, by the way, the father of Senator Cruz escaped for America, the land of the free. The notion that we would start down that slippery slope makes absolutely no sense. It's contrary to who we are. And it's not going to help us defeat ISIL.

Last point I'll make on this: I understand, when we see the sight of these kinds of attacks, our hearts bleed because we know that could be our children. That could be our family members or our friends or our coworkers who travel to a place like Brussels. And it scares the American people. And it horrifies me. I've got two young daughters who are growing up a little too fast, and I want them to have the freedom to move and to travel around the world without the possibility that they'd be killed.

So I understand why this is the top priority of the American people. And I want them to understand this is my top priority as well. It is the top priority of my national security team. It is the top priority of our military. It is the top priority of our intelligence officers. It is the top priority of our diplomats. But we are approaching this in a way that has a chance of working. And it will work. And we're not going to do things that are counterproductive simply because it's political season. We're going to be steady, we're going to be resolute, and ultimately, we're going to be successful.

*[President Macri spoke in English as follows.]*

*President Macri.* Excuse me, but I don't think that it will help in any sense that I advance any opinion about what we are going to find. Let's wait, study the documentation, and then we can do some comments on it. Thank you.

*Mr. Pavlovsky.* Next, a question from Martin Dinatale, La Nacion newspaper.

*[The reporter spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]*

### *U.S. Foreign Policy/Brazil*

*Q.* I would like to ask you what you think is, or was, the role of the United States during the dictatorships that the region experienced, and whether you think there should be some self-criticism on the part of the United States with regard to that role during the era of dictatorships.

And I would like to ask both Presidents whether you have discussed the Brazilian crisis during your meeting.

*President Obama.* I have spent a lot of time, both before I was President and since I've been President, studying the history of U.S. foreign policy. And like the history of any country's



foreign policy, there are moments of great success and glory, and there are moments that were counterproductive or contrary to what I believe America should stand for.

And I don't want to go through the list of every activity of the United States in Latin America over the last hundred years. I suspect everybody here knows that history at least as well as I do. What is true, though, is that in the seventies, the recognition that human rights, how we approached foreign policy, how we approached our diplomacy was as important as fighting communism or whatever our long-term objective was; that that became much more central to U.S. foreign policy in both Democratic and Republican administrations; that there was a growth and a maturation of how we approached our foreign policy relationships.

And so if you look at how administrations thought about other countries back in the thirties or the fifties or the sixties, and you compare it to how we would have a conversation in the Oval Office today and what we would think was appropriate and what we would think was not appropriate, that has changed over time. And I think it's changed in a positive way.

And I think one of the great things about America—and I said this in Cuba—is, we actually engage in a lot of self-criticism. There is no shortage of self-criticism in the United States. Certainly no shortage of criticism of its President—*[laughter]*—or its Government or its foreign policy. And there are issues that I work on where I'm sometimes criticized from the left and the right at the same time, although for different reasons.

The one thing that I will say is true, though, is that everything we do today is designed to take into account transparency, human rights, to speak out on behalf of those issues. Even where we don't feel that we can force changes on a government, we're still going to speak out about them. So I made a historic trip to Havana, and I said the people of Cuba have nothing to fear from me, but you should know what I really believe. I believe that democracy is better than a one-party or one-person dictatorship. I believe in freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and that people shouldn't be arbitrarily detained. And I'd say the same thing when I'm in China or in Russia or with some of our allies in ways that are uncomfortable.

And so I think that it has become a habit. And we have learned some of the lessons that we may not have fully learned at an earlier time. And I think our experiences with a country like Argentina helped us to develop that more mature and—ultimately, I think, more successful—approach to foreign policy.

*President Macri.* Brazil.

*President Obama.* In terms of Brazil, we didn't discuss it extensively, other than the fact that we hope Brazil resolves its current political crisis in an effective way. It is a big country. It is a friend to both of our countries. The good news—and President Macri, I think, pointed this out—their democracy is sufficiently mature, their systems of laws and structures, I think, are strong enough that this will get resolved in a way that allows Brazil ultimately to prosper and be the significant world leader that it is. We need a strong and effective Brazil for our own economies and for world peace.

*President Macri.* That's the way it is. That is what we discussed. We clearly are following this closely based on the affection we feel for the Brazilian people, Brazil being our main strategic partner out into the world through MERCOSUR. But we're convinced that Brazil will come out of this process and crisis strengthened, and we hope this will be as soon as possible. Because, clearly, whatever happens in Brazil also has an impact on what happens in our own country.

## *U.S. Response to Terrorism/Syria*

*Mr. Earnest.* The second U.S. question will come from Margaret Talev of Bloomberg News.

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. President Obama, in the wake of the Brussels attacks, you obviously thought a lot about whether to go ahead and attend that baseball game yesterday in Cuba and to continue on to Argentina and complete this trip. But you're catching some flak for it, from some political critics at home. And I'm wondering, would you walk us through why you decided that this was the correct course in terms of optics and message? What is that message?

And finally, on the trip, it seems to me that both in Cuba and in Argentina, you are seeking to roll back some of the maybe overreach or interventionism of the cold war era. Wondering, now that you're here, whether that's shaping your views on intervention in Syria or—and a plan B.

And, President Macri, President Obama believes that normalizing relations with Cuba will give the U.S. a lot more credibility and leverage around Latin America. I'm wondering if you also believe that's true. And will you both commit to attending the Olympics in Brazil, no matter what happens with instability? Thank you.

*President Obama.* Margaret, I addressed this issue a little bit at the baseball game when I was interviewed by ESPN, but let me reiterate it. Groups like ISIL can't destroy us; they can't defeat us. They don't produce anything. They're not an existential threat to us. They are vicious killers and murderers who have perverted one of the world's great religions. And their primary power, in addition to killing innocent lives, is to strike fear in our societies, to disrupt our societies, so that the effect cascades from an explosion or an attack by a semiautomatic rifle.

And even as we are systematic and ruthless and focused in going after them—disrupting their networks, getting their leaders, rolling up their operations—it is very important for us to not respond with fear. Now, as I said, that's hard to do because we see the impact in such an intimate way of the attacks that they make. But we defeat them in part by saying, you are not strong; you are weak. We send a message to those who might be inspired by them to say, you are not going to change our values of liberty and openness and the respect of all people.

And I mentioned at the baseball game yesterday, one of my proudest moments as President was watching Boston respond after the Boston Marathon attack, because they taught America a lesson. They grieved; I was there for the memorial. We apprehended those who had carried this out. But a few days later, folks were out shopping. A few days later, people were in that baseball stadium and singing the national anthem. And "Big Papi" was saying what he felt about Boston—Boston Strong—and how a terrorist attack was not going to change the basic spirit of that city. Well, at that moment, he spoke about what America is.

And that is how we are going to defeat these terrorist groups. In part, because we're going after them and taking strikes against them and arresting them and getting intelligence on them, and cooperating with other countries. But a lot of it is also going to be to say, you do not have power over us. We are strong. Our values are right. You offer nothing except death.

And so it's important for the U.S. President—and the U.S. Government—to be able to work with people who are building and who are creating things and creating jobs and trying to solve major problems like climate change and setting up educational exchanges for young people who are going to create the next new, great invention or scientific breakthrough that

can cure diseases. We have to make sure that we lift up, and stay focused, as well, on the things that are most important to us. Because we're on the right side of history.

And with respect to how my reading of our history in Latin America impacts Syria, I think it's apples and oranges. What I have been clear about is, where—when it comes to defending the United States or its allies and our core interests, I will not hesitate to use military force where necessary. When it is—but how we do that is important. We don't just go ahead and blow something up just so that we can go back home and say we blew something up. That's not a foreign policy. That's not a military strategy.

And I do think it is important for the President of the United States and the administration to think through what they're doing so that they can achieve the objectives that are the priorities of the American people. And I can tell you that how I spend my time is thinking through—with our generals, with our military, with our best thinkers—how are we going to most effectively go after ISIL; how do we most effectively bring peace to Syria. We don't just throw some military action at it without having thought it through and making sure that it's effective.

*President Macri.* Well, I will give you my opinion on President Obama's trip to Cuba. It will be the great progress in American terms because doors have opened and tools have been given to those who want to choose again. And he, as President of the United States there, went without relinquishing any of the values we embrace in the United States and Argentina: the flag of freedom, the cause of freedom. In other words, it's about every human being able to decide what they want to do in their own future.

I think this step that has been taken enables and speeds up the discussion. And that's what we need for the Cuban youth who want more freedom, to find more partners around the whole world. I see that very positively, and I think it will be highly positive for the next few years, this relationship between United States and Latin America as well.

*Q.* [Inaudible]

[*President Macri spoke in English as follows.*]

*President Macri.* No, I can't hear it.

*Q.* [Inaudible]—the Olympics regardless of the instability there?

[*President Macri continued in English as follows.*]

*President Macri.* That's out of the program. [*Laughter*] I'm going, I'm their neighbor. I won't be able to run—I'm not in shape—but I will, in any case, go to the Olympics.

Now, we are set?

*President Obama.* [Inaudible]—have a Facebook question?

*President Macri.* Facebook? Yes, Facebook. Sorry, sir. Yes.

### *President Obama's Goals and Accomplishments*

*Mr. Pavlovsky.* So through the Casa Rosada Facebook page, we have invited people to suggest questions to ask both Presidents. And we chose this one from Maria Pia Montero, from San Nicolas, in the Province of Buenos Aires: "What was your dream when you got elected? And were you able to realize it?"

*President Obama.* Well, you know, I—I ran for office because I believe deeply in the American people and that our politics did not fully reflect all the values and the talents and the goodness of the American people. And I thought I might be able to align our Government with our ideals: to make sure every child has opportunity; to make sure that if people get sick, they can get health care; to make sure that we don't discriminate against people on the basis of race or gender or disability or sexual orientation; that we are good stewards for our planet; that we grow an economy so that everybody benefits, and not just a few at the top.

And I wrote down a list of things I wanted to do, and I keep it in my desk. And I won't say that I've gotten a hundred percent done, but we've gotten a lot done. It is indisputable that the economy is much stronger now than when I came into office. We've created over 14 million new jobs. We've cut our fiscal deficits by two-thirds. We have provided health insurance to 20 million people who didn't have it before. We have not only reduced the acceleration of our carbon footprint, but we helped lead the way to gain a global agreement on climate change.

On the international front, Cuba is just an—one example of the work we've done. The Iran nuclear deal that took away that threat from the world, but also gave Iran an opportunity now to rejoin the community of nations. The work that we've done in Afghanistan: ending a war, but now giving them the opportunity to secure their own future. Work in remote places like Burma, where what had been a 40-year military junta is now on the brink of a new era of democracy. So I think our values—the values that I felt were—best represented America—has also been reflected in our foreign policy.

Now, one of the things I learned after 7½ years in office is that—and I've used this metaphor before—President Macri talked about running—we're like a relay runner. We take the baton. And sometimes, when we take the baton, we're behind in the race. And we don't always choose the circumstances when we get the baton. The question is, for our leg of the race, did we advance the causes we care about? Did our team gain ground against the challenges that we care about? And on that front, I believe we have achieved that.

But we still have a lot of work to do. There are a lot of people in America who are still looking for more opportunity. I certainly have not been successful in getting the two parties to work together more cooperatively. And the tone of our politics is not—doesn't reflect, I think, what's best in us. There are still major challenges. ISIL is still killing people. North Korea still has a nuclear weapons program. Middle East peace has not been achieved.

So if I were satisfied now, then I would be blind to the many challenges we face. I can say with confidence that the work we've done has made both America, and I think the world, stronger and better. And I feel pretty good about the fact that I can look back and say that I operated with honesty and integrity and don't feel as if I said things I didn't believe or acted in ways that would make me ashamed. And that, I think, counts for something as well.

I said this before: I would have started dyeing my hair sooner so people wouldn't realize how much I've aged during these 7½ years, but it's too late now. [*Laughter*] So I'll just have to go with it.

[*President Macri spoke in English as follows.*]

*President Macri.* I started like this right away, so—[*laughter*].

*Mr. Pavlovsky.* The same question for President Macri.

[*President Macri spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

*President Macri.* I'm only just starting, but I would like to say—also stressing the first few words of President Obama—I am also here because I deeply believe in my people. I know this country, and I know what it's capable of doing. So I think we are all committed to building opportunities for all of us to be able to develop and to learn from one another.

And also there's something you said: To heal the wounds of the past, we need to put our future, our children, our grandchildren as the priority and build solutions that clearly need to be connected to the world. Isolated from the rest of the world, there's no future for Argentina. This is why your visit is so important, just like the visits of other Presidents and Prime Ministers who visited recently.

And that is what we're betting on: growing in peace, leaving a mark of peace, honesty, and hard work, which is what we Argentines are capable of doing.

*Mr. Pavlovsky.* So this concludes the press conference. Thank you very much to both Presidents, Mr. Macri and Mr. Obama.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:56 p.m. in the Salon Blanca at the Casa Rosada. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Charles Michel of Belgium; Agustina, Jimena, Francisco, and Antonia Macri, children of President Macri; Rafael B. Cruz, father of Sen. Cruz; Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was convicted for his role in the Boston Marathon terrorist attacks of April 15, 2013; and David A. "Big Papi" Ortiz, designated hitter, Major League Baseball's Boston Red Sox. President Macri referred to the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), the Common Market of the South. President Macri, Mr. Pavlovsky, and reporters spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences :: Argentina, President Macri.

*Locations:* Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*Names:* Cruz, Edward R. "Ted"; Cruz, Rafael B.; Macri, Agustina; Macri, Antonia; Macri, Francisco; Macri, Jimena; Macri, Mauricio; Michel, Charles Yvon.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : Reconstruction efforts; Argentina : Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) terrorist bombing in 1994; Argentina : Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; Argentina : Counternarcotics and drug interdiction efforts; Argentina : Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.; Argentina : Economic growth and development; Argentina : President; Argentina : President Obama's visit; Argentina : Relations with U.S.; Argentina : Trade with U.S.; Belgium : Prime Minister; Belgium : Terrorist attacks in Brussels; Brazil : Relations with U.S.; Burma : Democracy efforts; Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Diseases: Zika epidemic, domestic response and containment efforts; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Carbon dioxide emissions, reduction; Energy : Domestic sources; Environment : Climate change; Environment : Paris Agreement; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Foreign policy, U.S. : Global Health Security Agenda; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Iran : Nuclear program, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Massachusetts : 2013 Boston Marathon bombing in Boston; Middle East : Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; Ortiz, David A. "Big Papi"; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Syria : Refugees, humanitarian situation; Syria : U.S. and coalition airstrikes; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Islamic State of

Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Western Hemisphere : Inter-American Human Rights System; Western Hemisphere : Organization of American States.

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