

## Statement on “The Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future: Progress Report” March 12, 2012

The progress report I received today from members of my administration underscores the headway our Nation has made towards reducing our reliance on foreign oil, while also expanding American made energy. As the report highlights, we have made progress, with imports of foreign oil decreasing by a million barrels a day in the last year alone. Our focus on increased domestic oil and gas production, currently at an 8-year high, combined with the historic fuel economy standards we put in place, means that we will continue to reduce our Nation’s vulnerability to the ups and downs

of the global oil market. We’ve also made progress in the expansion of clean energy, with renewable energy from sources like wind and solar on track to double, along with the construction of our first advanced biofuel refineries. And yet, despite the gains we’ve made, today’s high gas prices are a painful reminder that there’s much more work to do free ourselves from our dependence on foreign oil and take control of our energy future. And that’s exactly what our administration is committed to doing in the months ahead.

## Remarks on Trade Policy March 13, 2012

Good morning, everybody. Before I make an announcement about our efforts to stand up for U.S. businesses and U.S. workers, I’d like to say a few words about the situation in Afghanistan.

### *Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan*

Over the weekend, as many of you know, there was a tragic incident in which a number of Afghan civilians were killed. What I’ve made to President Karzai when I spoke to him is that the United States takes this as seriously as if it was our own citizens and our own children who were murdered. We’re heartbroken over the loss of innocent life. The killing of innocent civilians is outrageous, and it’s unacceptable. It’s not who we are as a country, and it does not represent our military.

And for that reason, I’ve directed the Pentagon to make sure that we spare no effort in conducting a full investigation. I can assure the American people and the Afghan people that we will follow the facts wherever they lead us, and we will make sure that anybody who was involved is held fully accountable with the full force of the law.

Yesterday I met with General Allen and Ambassador Crocker, who were here in Washington, and I’ve extraordinary confidence in them and in the many Americans who are serving in Afghanistan and who have made extraordinary sacrifices to be there. Today I’ll be meeting with Prime Minister Cameron, who is part of our broad coalition serving in Afghanistan, and we’ll have an opportunity to consult about the way forward as we prepare for the NATO summit in Chicago later this spring.

So make no mistake, we have a strategy that will allow us to responsibly wind down this war. We’re steadily transitioning to the Afghans who are moving into the lead, and that’s going to allow us to bring our troops home. Already we’re scheduled to remove 23,000 troops by the end of this summer, followed by—following the 10,000 that we withdrew last year. And meanwhile, we will continue the work of devastating Al Qaida’s leadership and denying them a safe haven.

There’s no question that we face a difficult challenge in Afghanistan, but I am confident that we can continue the work of meeting our objectives, protecting our country, and responsibly bringing this war to a close.

*Free and Fair Trade*

Now, one of the things that I talked about during the State of the Union Address was making America more competitive in the global economy. The good news is that we have the best workers and the best businesses in the world. They turn out the best products. And when the playing field is level, they'll always be able to compete and succeed against every other country on Earth.

But the key is to make sure that the playing field is level. And frankly, sometimes it's not. I will always try to work our differences through with other countries. We prefer dialogue. That's especially true when it comes to key trading partners like China. We've got a constructive economic relationship with China, and whenever possible, we are committed to working with them to addressing our concerns. But when it is necessary, I will take action if our workers and our businesses are being subjected to unfair practices.

Since I took office, we've brought trade cases against China at nearly twice the rate as the last administration, and these actions are making a difference. For example, we halted an unfair surge in Chinese tires, which has helped put over 1,000 American workers back on the job. But we haven't stopped there.

Two weeks ago, I created a trade enforcement unit to aggressively investigate any unfair trade practices taking place anywhere in the world. And as they ramp up their efforts, our competitors should be on notice: You will not get away with skirting the rules. When we can, we will rally support from our allies. And when it makes sense to act on our own, we will.

I just signed a bill to help American companies that are facing unfair foreign competition. These companies employ tens of thousands of Americans in nearly 40 States. Because of subsidies from foreign governments, some of their foreign competitors are selling products at an artificially low price. That needs to stop.

This morning we're taking an additional step forward. We're bringing a new trade case

against China, and we're being joined by Japan and some of our European allies. This case involves something called rare earth materials, which are used by American manufacturers to make high-tech products like advanced batteries that power everything from hybrid cars to cell phones.

We want our companies building those products right here in America. But to do that, American manufacturers need to have access to rare earth materials, which China supplies. Now, if China would simply let the market work on its own, we'd have no objections. But their policies currently are preventing that from happening. And they go against the very rules that China agreed to follow.

Being able to manufacture advanced batteries and hybrid cars in America is too important for us to stand by and do nothing. We've got to take control of our energy future, and we can't let that energy industry take root in some other country because they were allowed to break the rules. So our administration will bring this case against China today, and we will keep working every single day to give American workers and American businesses a fair shot in the global economy.

We're going to make sure that this isn't a country that's just known for what we consume. America needs to get back to doing what it's always done best—a country that builds and sells products all over the world that are stamped with the proud words "Made in America." That's how we create good, middle class jobs at home, and that's how we're going to create an economy that's built to last.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John R. Allen, USMC, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan C. Crocker; and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom.