

When Anthony needed help, Doron Lamb stepped up, dropping 22 points in the biggest game of his career. First off the bench, Darius Miller, who became the first player in Kentucky history to be named Mr. Basketball, win a State championship in high school and win a national title with the Wildcats. I'm pretty sure Coach Cal is right that if Darius decides to run for Governor, he'll do all right in Kentucky. [Laughter] I also want to congratulate Darius and Eloy Vargas for getting their diplomas on Sunday. That's worth a big round of applause.

And I want to congratulate them for doing their share of community service in the Lexington community, from packing backpacks full of food for kids who don't have enough to raising money for tornado victims.

So these guys do it all. Everybody's got to take a good look now, because a whole bunch of these guys are going on to the NBA. Who knows, one of them might end up here in Washington. We'll take him.

Coach Cal is back on the recruiting trail, and if the next group of Wildcats is anything like this one, then I might see them again sometime soon.

So congratulations again to all the fans, to all the faculty, to all the—everybody who helps to make Kentucky such an outstanding university. Most of all, congratulations to the team and to Coach Calipari.

Head Coach John V. Calipari. Thank you very much. Mr. President, on behalf of the Big Blue Nation, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, we are honored and humbled to be here. This team, when they won that championship on that court in New Orleans, they were jumping up and down not saying: "We did it! We won!"

The President's Weekly Address May 5, 2012

This week, I traveled to Afghanistan to thank our troops serving far from home and to sign a historic agreement that will help us complete our mission and end the war.

As Commander in Chief, nothing is more humbling or inspiring than the chance to spend some time with our troops. At Bagram

They were saying: "We're going to the White House! We're going to the White House!" [Laughter] Because they wanted to meet you.

As a member of our team, I'd like our seniors, Darius Miller, to give you his number-one jersey that he wore for 4 years.

The President. That's great.

Coach Calipari. Eloy Vargas has a ball that he—the team has signed, and the young—[applause]. There's the number-one jersey.

The President. That's a good-looking jersey right there.

Coach Calipari. And the young guy from your home city of Chicago—

The President. Chicago! [Laughter]

Coach Calipari. —would like to present you with the 2012 National Championship ring, and I might say, it is the first.

The President. Hold that up. Look at that. That's all right. That's beautiful, man. Fantastic. Well, this is some nice gear. [Laughter] I have to say, by the way, after the game, I called the coach and the team, and I mentioned to Anthony that I had actually been to his school, a small charter school in Chicago, when I was still a Senator. And I had spoken to the kids there, and he told me, yes, I was there. [Laughter] But I didn't recognize him. He looked a little different apparently 4 years ago. So what a wonderful set of gifts. I appreciate that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Kidd-Gilchrist, Anthony Davis, and Eloy Vargas, forwards, and Doron Lamb and Darius Miller, guards, University of Kentucky men's basketball team.

Air Base, I visited with some of our outstanding men and women in uniform. I thanked them for their extraordinary service. And I let them know that America honors their sacrifice.

Because of their bravery and dedication, the tide of war has turned in Afghanistan. We've broken the Taliban's momentum. We've built

strong Afghan security forces. We've devastated Al Qaida's leadership. And 1 year ago, our troops launched the operation that killed Usama bin Laden. The goal that I set to defeat Al Qaida and deny it a chance to rebuild is within reach.

Because of the progress we've made, I was able to sign an historic agreement between the United States and Afghanistan that defines a new kind of relationship between our countries: a future in which Afghans are responsible for the security of their nation and we build an equal partnership between two sovereign states, a future in which the war ends and a new chapter begins.

The enormous sacrifices of our men and women in uniform are not over, but many of our troops are already coming home. Last year, we removed 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan; another 23,000 will leave by the end of the summer. As our coalition agreed, by the end of 2014, the Afghans will be fully responsible for the security of their country. And this is as it should be, because after more than a decade of war, it's time to focus on nation-building here at home.

As a new greatest generation returns from overseas, we must ask ourselves: What kind of country will they come back to? Will it be a country where a shrinking number of Americans do really well while a growing number barely get by? Or will it be a country where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules, a country with opportunity worthy of the troops who protect us?

America has answered this question before. My grandfather, a veteran of Patton's army, got the chance to go to college on the GI bill. My grandmother, who worked on a bomber assembly line, was part of a workforce that turned out the best products on Earth. They contributed to a story of success that every American had the chance to share in: the basic American

promise that if you worked hard, you could do well enough to raise a family, own a home, send your kids to college, and put a little away for retirement.

Keeping that promise alive is the defining issue of our time. But it means making responsible choices.

I don't think we should prioritize things like more tax cuts for millionaires while cutting the kinds of investments that build a strong middle class. That's why I've called on Congress to take the money we're no longer spending at war, use half of it to pay down our debt, and use the other half to rebuild America.

Because we've got more jobs to create, more students to educate, more clean energy to generate, more entrepreneurs with the next great idea, just looking for their shot at success. We've got to invest in things like education and medical research. We've got to build newer and faster transportations and communications networks. And we've got to secure the care and benefits our veterans have earned, so that we serve them as well as they've served us.

Every time I have the privilege of meeting with our troops, I'm struck by their courage, their commitment, their selflessness, and their teamwork. They have something to teach us. Recovering from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression is a work in progress, but if we follow their example, then I have no doubt we will preserve the promise of this country, protect the freedoms we cherish, and leave for our children an America that's built to last.

God bless you, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on May 4 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on May 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 4, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 5.