

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions of the Government of Syria May 9, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency, unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions of the Government of Syria declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13399 of April 25, 2006, Executive Order 13460 of February 13, 2008, Executive Order 13572 of April 29, 2011, Executive Order 13573 of May 18, 2011, Executive Order 13582 of August 17, 2011, Executive Order 13606 of April 22, 2012, and Executive Order 13608 of May 1, 2012, is to continue in effect beyond May 11, 2012.

While the Syrian regime has reduced the number of foreign fighters bound for Iraq, the regime's own brutality and repression of its citizens who have been calling for freedom and a representative government endangers not only the Syrian people themselves, but could yield greater instability throughout the region. The

Syrian regime's actions and policies, including obstructing the Lebanese government's ability to function effectively, pursuing chemical and biological weapons, and supporting terrorist organizations, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect the national emergency declared with respect to this threat and to maintain in force the sanctions to address this national emergency.

In addition, the United States condemns the Asad regime's use of brutal violence and human rights abuses and calls on the Asad regime to step aside and immediately begin a transition in Syria to a political process that will forge a credible path to a future of greater freedom, democracy, opportunity, and justice. The United States will consider changes in the composition, policies, and actions of the Government of Syria in determining whether to continue or terminate this national emergency in the future.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
May 9, 2012.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at PBS's "Burt Bacharach and Hal David: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song In Performance at the White House" May 9, 2012

Good evening, everybody. Well, thank you all for joining us tonight to honor a legendary songwriting duo: Burt Bacharach and Hal David.

I want to start by thanking the outstanding artists who are here to pay tribute to Burt and Hal. They have just been extraordinary.

I'd also like to thank Dr. James Billington of the Library of Congress and the outstanding team of producers for their hand in making tonight's wonderful evening possible.

And finally, I want to say a word about someone who is missing tonight. Even though Hal cannot be here with us, this celebration is

for him. And we're happy that his lovely wife Eunice David is here to receive his award—this award on his behalf.

The Gershwin Prize is named for one of the great American songwriting duos of all time. And it's fitting that tonight's award is being presented to another.

Burt and Hal first met at Famous Music in the Brill Building in New York. Burt had come a long way from his days of hoping to be a football player—[laughter]—as well as a musical career. And Hal had taken his wordsmithing from the pages of New York newspapers to the frontlines of big band. Soon, the football player and the journalist started writing songs, and they struck gold in 1957 with Marty Robbins singing “The Story of My Life.”

What began as an occasional collaboration in the late fifties quickly became a partnership that produced dozens of Top 40 hits. There was even a span of 10 years during the 1960s and seventies when a week rarely went by without one of their songs being on the Billboard charts.

Burt and Hal racked up Grammys and Oscars and have been honored by numerous lifetime achievement awards. And today, more than 55 years after their first songs hit the airwaves, these guys have still got it. Alicia Keys and John Legend are recording their songs.

Burt is appearing on “American Idol” and “Dancing with the Stars.” [Laughter] And in 2004, Burt and Hal worked with Twista, Kanye West, and Jamie Foxx to get back to number one with a slow jam medley. So these guys can work with anybody. [Laughter]

Like the Gershwin brothers, Burt and Hal have never been limited to one genre or even one generation. Burt once said that all he looks for in writing a good melody is “to write something that I like.” Hal agreed, saying, “We just tried to write with as much integrity as we could.” Above all, they stayed true to themselves. And with an unmistakable authenticity, they captured the emotions of our daily lives: the good times, the bad times, and everything in between. And they've lived their lives on their own terms, and they've taught Americans of all ages to embrace their individual stories, even as we move forward together.

So tonight, on behalf of a grateful nation, it is my privilege to present the Nation's highest prize for popular music to two kings of songwriting, Burt Bacharach and Hal David.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Carl T. “Twista” Mitchell.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Seattle, Washington May 10, 2012

The President. All right! Give it up for Libby!

Libby Blume. Hello. Thank you very much for coming. We're all very honored. I'm Libby. I'm the youngest of the Blumes. And I'm very, very proud to present the President of the United States of America.

The President. Yay! Yay! Nice job!

Thank you. Libby knows the key to good public speaking: Be brief. [Laughter] That always makes people happy.

I just want to thank the entire Blume family—especially Libby—but in addition to Bruce and Ann, their other kids, Max, Rebecca, Jacob, and Scooter, for opening up this extraordi-

nary home to us and for their friendship. I'm so grateful to you guys.

Thanks for whoever is in charge of the weather. [Laughter] I've been told this is typical Seattle weather. [Laughter] But I've been here before so—[laughter].

What I'm going to do is actually be pretty brief at the top because what I'd really enjoy is just answering questions and getting comments and kind of hearing what you guys are thinking about.

We've been through an extraordinary period in American history: worst financial crisis, worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. When you think about the Blume family