

Remarks to Firefighters and First-Responders in Colorado Springs June 29, 2012

[*The President's remarks were joined in progress.*]

—just to say thank you. I know that everybody here has been working nonstop. We just had a chance to see one of the subdivisions that have been obviously devastated by the course of this fire. But we also had a chance while we were there to thank some guys who were on the site who had just saved three homes.

And what I told the press earlier, in natural disasters like this, the Federal Government, our job is to provide all the resources possible. What we've been seeing is unprecedented coordination between Federal, State, and local resources and personnel.

I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Bach, as well as Governor Hickenlooper for the great work they've been doing. We've been doing some unusual stuff using military assets for the first time in a different kind of way to help leverage some of the resources that you guys already have.

But the main thing I said was no matter how much equipment you have, no matter how

many resources are provided, we don't provide you with the courage and professionalism and stick-to-it-ness that all of you guys show every single day. So I want you to know that not only is this community grateful for your work, but the country is grateful for your work. And I want you to know that we're going to stay on it. The job is obviously not done yet, but the country has got your back. And just remember, each and every day, despite all the sacrifices—and what I got to assume is some pretty weary bodies—that you got a lot of people out there who are grateful and families whose lives are going to be better because of what you do every day.

So thank you very much. And with that, all I want to do is go shake some hands and say I appreciate you.

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at Fire Station 9. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Stephen G. Bach of Colorado Springs, CO. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Tour of Wildfire Damage in Colorado Springs June 29, 2012

Well, we just had a chance to tour some of the damage that's been done by this devastating fire. I've had a chance to thank Mayor Bach, as well as Governor Hickenlooper, and the entire congressional delegation; members of the fire service—the Forest Service, as well as local fire officials have gotten a full briefing.

I think what you see here is an example of outstanding coordination and cooperation between Federal, State, and local agencies. We have been putting everything we have into trying to deal with what's one of the worst fires that we've seen here in Colorado. And it's still early in the fire season, and we still got a lot more work to do. But because of the outstanding work that's been done, because of not only

the coordination, but also some unprecedented arrangements that have been made with military resources combined with the civil resources, we're starting to see progress.

Obviously, as you saw in some of these subdivisions, the devastation is enormous. And our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families who have been affected.

One of the things that I've tried to emphasize is that whether it's fires in Colorado or flooding in the northern parts of Florida, when natural disasters like this hit, America comes together. And we all recognize that there, but for the grace of God, go I. We've got to make sure that we have each other's backs. And that spirit is what you're seeing in terms of

volunteers, in terms of firefighters, in terms of Government officials. Everybody is pulling together to try to deal with this situation.

Now, as I said, we're not completely out of the woods yet. These folks, some of them have been working 18-hour days, 20-hour days, trying to make sure that these fires get put out. They're going to be carefully monitoring the situation; ultimately, they're going to need a little bit of help from Mother Nature in order to fully extinguish these fires.

In the meantime, some lessons are being learned about how we can mitigate some of these fires in the future, and I know that the mayor and Governor and other local officials are already in those conversations. It means that, hopefully, out of this tragedy, some long-term planning occurs, and it may be that we can curb some of the damage that happens the next time, even though you obviously can't fully control fires that are starting up in these mountains.

Last point I just want to make, and that is that we can provide all the resources, we can make sure that they're well coordinated, but as I just told these firefighters, what we can't do is to provide them with the courage and the determination and the professionalism, the heart

that they show when they're out there battling these fires.

When we had a chance onsite to see some guys who had just saved three homes in a community that had been devastated, for those families, the work and the sacrifice of those firefighters means the world to them, and they are genuine heroes.

And so we want to just say thank you to all the folks who have been involved in this. We're proud of you. We appreciate what you do each and every day. And so for folks all around the country, I hope you are reminded of how important our fire departments are, our Forest Service is. Sometimes they don't get the credit that they deserve until your house is burning down or your community is being threatened. And you have to understand they're putting their lives at risk to save us and to help us. We've got to make sure that we remember that 365 days a year, not just when tragedies like this strike.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. at Fire Station 9. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Stephen G. Bach of Colorado Springs, CO.

Message to the Congress Suspending Generalized System of Preferences Benefits to Gibraltar and the Turks and Caicos Islands

June 29, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 502(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(2)), I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designations of Gibraltar and the Turks and Caicos Islands as beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Section 502(e) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(e)) provides that if the President determines that a beneficiary developing country has become a "high income" country, as defined by the official statistics of

the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (i.e., the World Bank), then the President shall terminate the designation of such country as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of GSP, effective on January 1 of the second year following the year in which such determination is made.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to terminate Gibraltar's designation as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP program, because it has become a high income country as defined by the World Bank. Accordingly,