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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 23, 2014

Remarks by President Obama in Meeting with Arab Coalition Partners

Waldorf Astoria Hotel
New York, New York

4:07 P.M. EDT

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, it is a wonderful opportunity for me to welcome these leaders, friends, partners from the region, and to say thank you to all of them for their participation and commitment to rolling back the violent extremism that has so disrupted Iraq and Syria and threatens the region as a whole.

And in addition to His Majesty, King Abdullah, I want to give a special welcome to Prime Minister Abadi and say congratulations to him for his leadership. To our friends from Saudi Arabia, from Bahrain and Qatar, we want to thank you very much for everything that you have done, and the United Arab Emirates as well.

This represents partners and friends in which we have worked for very many years to make sure that security and prosperity exists in this region. And what we've all seen is that, with the emergence of ISIL, so much progress is threatened and so many people's lives are threatened. And because of the almost unprecedented effort of this coalition, I think we now have an opportunity to send a very clear message that the world is united; that all of us are committed to making sure that we degrade and ultimately destroy not only ISIL, but also the kinds of extremist ideologies that would lead to so much bloodshed.

This is not going to be something that is quick, and it is not something that is going to be easy. It will take time. And it's not only a military effort. I think what we all understand here is that young people have to have opportunity. We have to make sure that we're providing the education that's necessary for young people to succeed in a modern economy; that we all have to promote religious tolerance. And it is going to be also important to provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic growth in these communities.

These are all issues in which the United States has worked and will continue to work with these countries. But we also recognize that right now we have a very severe and significant threat. What we've seen from the world community is a recognition of that threat. And we are very appreciative of our partnership with all the countries here.

We are committed to a sovereign Iraq that is able to maintain its territorial integrity and provide for its own security. We are committed to a Syria that is at peace, and is not having the sorts of spillover effects that are burdening its neighbors. We're committed to making sure that millions of people can return to their homes, and that they can live in peace and security. And we are committed to making sure that we put an end to the kind of sectarian strife that has been so prevalent for the last several

years and has harmed so many people.

So again, I just want to say thank you to all of you. This is obviously not the end of an effort, but is rather a beginning. But I'm confident with the kind of partnership that is represented here, that we'll be able to be successful.

Thank you very much, everybody.

END

4:11 P.M. EDT

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