

Remarks by the President Before Meeting with Cabinet Members

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September 12, 2013

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 12, 2013

Cabinet Room

11:17 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, obviously we're missing a few members of our Cabinet here today. In particular, John Kerry is overseas meeting on a topic that we've been spending a lot of time on over the last several weeks -- the situation in Syria and how we can make sure that chemical weapons are not used against innocent people.

I am hopeful that the discussions that Secretary Kerry had with Foreign Minister Lavrov as well as some of the other players in this can yield a concrete result. And I know that he is going to be working very hard over the next several days to see what the possibilities are there.

But even as we have been spending a lot of time on the Syria issue and making sure that international attention is focused on the horrible tragedy that occurred there, it is still important to recognize that we've got a lot more stuff to do here in this government.

The American people are still interested in making sure that our kids are getting the kind of education they deserve; that we're putting people back to work; that we are dealing properly with a federal budget; that bills are getting paid on time; that the full faith and credit of the United States is preserved; and that the federal government itself is, in every single agency, running the way it should and making sure that our constituents and the American people are getting a good deal.

So we're going to spend some time here today talking about all the efforts that have been made by many of these Cabinet secretaries to streamline operations, to cut out waste, to improve performance, to improve customer satisfaction. We're going to focus on some specific issues, including managing some of the budget debates that are going to be taking place over the next several weeks.

We're going to be talking about the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, where we've seen some tremendous progress over the last several months and are confident that starting at the beginning of next month, people are going to be able to start signing up for health care

-- in many cases, for the first time. And we're going to spend some time talking about issues like comprehensive immigration reform that are still of enormous importance to ensure that America grows.

So I appreciate all the great work that people have done. Some of the Cabinet members here are still relatively new, but thanks to their confirmations and the great teams they put around them, I know that they're hitting the ground running.

Thank you very much, everybody.

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11:20 A.M. EDT