

But I'm heartened by what I'm seeing, by the willingness of old adversaries to seek out new partnerships, by the progress we've made these past months to address many of our toughest challenges. And I'm confident that as a nation we will learn the lessons of our recent past and that we will elevate again those values at the heart of our success as a people: hard work over the easy buck, responsibility over recklessness, and, yes, moderation over extravagance.

This work has already begun, and now it continues. I thank the Members of Congress for putting their shoulder to the wheel in a bipartisan fashion and getting this piece of legis-

lation done. Congratulations to all of you. The least I can do for you is to sign the thing. [Laughter]

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

All right, everybody. Thank you. Have a great weekend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to pipefitter William Hard of Freeland, MI. H.R. 627, approved May 22, was assigned Public Law No. 111-24.

The President's Weekly Address May 23, 2009

This Memorial Day weekend, Americans will gather on lawns and porches, fire up the grill, and enjoy the company of family, friends, and neighbors. But this is not only a time for celebration, it's also a time to reflect on what this holiday is all about, to pay tribute to our fallen heroes, and to remember the service men and women who cannot be with us this year because they are standing post far from home in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world.

On Friday, I traveled to Annapolis, where I spoke at the commencement of the United States Naval Academy. It was an honor to address some of America's newest sailors and marines as their Commander in Chief. Looking out at all of those young men and women, I was reminded of the extraordinary service that they are rendering to our country. And I was reminded too of all of the sacrifices that their parents, siblings, and loved ones make each day on their behalf and on our behalf.

Our fighting men and women and the military families who love them embody what's best in America. And we have a responsibility to serve all of them as well as they served us. And yet all too often in recent years and decades, we as a nation have failed to live up to that responsibility. We failed to give them the support they need or pay them the respect they deserve. That's a betrayal of the sacred

trust that America has with all who wear and all who have worn the proud uniform of our country.

And that is a sacred trust I am committed to keeping as President of the United States. That's why I will send our service men and women into harm's way only when it's necessary and ensure that they have the training and equipment they need when they enter the theater of war.

That's why we are building a 21st century Department of Veterans Affairs with the largest single-year funding increase in three decades. It's a commitment that will help us provide our veterans with the support and benefits they have earned and expand quality health care to a half million more veterans.

That's why, this week, I signed a bill that will eliminate some of the waste and inefficiency in our defense projects, reform that will better protect our Nation, better protect our troops, and save taxpayers tens of billions of dollars.

And that's why we are laying a new foundation for our economy, so that when our troops return home and take off the uniform, they can find a good job, provide for their families, and earn a college degree on a post-9/11 GI bill that will offer them the same opportunity to live out their dreams that was afforded our greatest generation.

These are some of the ways we can, must, and will honor the service of our troops and the sacrifices of their families. But we must also do our part, not only as a nation, but as individuals, for those Americans who are bearing the burden of wars being fought on our behalf. That can mean sending a letter or a care package to our troops overseas. It can mean volunteering at a clinic where a wounded warrior is being treated or bringing supplies to a homeless veterans' center. Or it can mean something as simple as saying thank you to a veteran you pass on the street.

That's what Memorial Day is all about. It's about doing all we can to repay the debt we owe to those men and women who have answered our Nation's call by fighting under its flag. It's about recognizing that we, as a people, did not get here by accident or good fortune alone. It's about remembering the hard winter of 1776, when our fragile American experiment seemed doomed to fail, and the early battles of 1861, when a union victory was anything but certain, and the summer of 1944, when the fate of a

world rested on a perilous landing unlike any ever attempted.

It's about remembering each and every one of those moments when our survival as a nation came down not simply to the wisdom of our leaders or the resilience of our people, but to the courage and valor of our fighting men and women. For it's only by remembering these moments that we can truly appreciate a simple lesson of American life: That what makes all we are and all we aspire to be possible are the sacrifices of an unbroken line of Americans that stretches back to our Nation's founding.

That's the meaning of this holiday. That's a truth at the heart of our history. And that is a lesson I hope all Americans will carry with them this Memorial Day weekend and beyond.

Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:15 p.m. on May 22 in the Green Room at the White House for broadcast on May 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 22 but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 23.

Statement on the Death of Former President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea *May 23, 2009*

I was saddened by the news of the death of former President Roh Moo-hyun of the Republic of Korea. During his tenure, President Roh contributed to the strong and vital relationship

between the United States and the Republic of Korea. On behalf of Government of the United States, I offer my condolences to his family and to the Korean people.

Remarks on the Situation in North Korea *May 25, 2009*

Good morning, everybody. We are on our way to Arlington to remember the fallen and those who have served America with extraordinary valor. But before I go there, I wanted to say a few words about North Korea's announcement that it has conducted a nuclear test, as well as its decision to attempt a short-range missile launch.

North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a great threat to the peace and security of the world, and I strongly condemn their reckless action. North Korea's actions en-

danger the people of Northeast Asia, they are a blatant violation of international law, and they contradict North Korea's own prior commitments.

Now, the United States and the international community must take action in response. The record is clear. North Korea has previously committed to abandoning its nuclear program. Instead of following through on that commitment, it has chosen to ignore that commitment. Its actions have also flown in the face of United Nations resolutions. As a result, North Korea is