

Thank you very much, everybody. All right. Thank you. God bless, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m.

## Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran *November 4, 2009*

Thirty years ago today, the American Embassy in Tehran was seized. The 444 days that began on November 4, 1979, deeply affected the lives of courageous Americans who were unjustly held hostage, and we owe these Americans and their families our gratitude for their extraordinary service and sacrifice.

This event helped set the United States and Iran on a path of sustained suspicion, mistrust, and confrontation. I have made it clear that the United States of America wants to move beyond this past and seeks a relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran based upon mutual interests and mutual respect. We do not interfere in Iran's internal affairs. We have condemned terrorist attacks against Iran. We have recognized Iran's international right to peaceful nuclear power. We have demonstrated our willingness to take confidence-building steps along with others in the international community. We have accepted a proposal by the International Atomic Energy Agency to meet Iran's request

for assistance in meeting the medical needs of its people. We have made clear that if Iran lives up to the obligations that every nation has, it will have a path to a more prosperous and productive relationship with the international community.

Iran must choose. We have heard for 30 years what the Iranian Government is against; the question now is what kind of future it is for. The American people have great respect for the people of Iran and their rich history. The world continues to bear witness to their powerful calls for justice and their courageous pursuit of universal rights. It is time for the Iranian Government to decide whether it wants to focus on the past, or whether it will make the choices that will open the door to greater opportunity, prosperity, and justice for its people.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Persian language version of this statement.

## Remarks at a White House Event Celebrating Classical Music *November 4, 2009*

Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. Michelle and I are delighted to host the fourth evening in a series showcasing the achievements of American musicians.

I'd like to welcome the many Members of Congress who've joined us tonight. Despite what you may have heard, they are actually a civilized bunch. *[Laughter]* Please join me in acknowledging our outstanding Secretary of Veterans Affairs Ric Shinseki is here as well, doing a tremendous job on behalf of our wounded warriors. I would also like to welcome the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, a group of men and women dedicated to

inspiring creative endeavors and strengthening America's deep commitment to the arts. And I understand that you had a wonderful program this afternoon and this morning with Michelle.

It's been a busy day of classical music here at the White House. Earlier, more than 100 students participated in a terrific workshop and concert led by tonight's performers. I want to thank those performers for coming to share their passion and their talent with us tonight: Joshua Bell, Sharon Isbin, Awadagin Pratt, and Alisa Weilerstein.

Any one of them would tell you that they're only here because of the hard work, dedication, and the fact that somebody along the way was

there for them. So I want to thank them for setting an important example for our gifted young musicians, who someday might be performing up here themselves.

Tonight's performance also continues a long tradition of sorts in the East Room. Over 120 years ago, the first formal concert was held here as President Chester A. Arthur and guests listened to Her Majesty's Opera Company performing the works of Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner. Since then, it's earned a rich history as a venue for White House concerts, and especially for those dedicated to classical music. From Van Cliburn to Yo-Yo Ma to our own Marine Chamber Orchestra and Marine Chamber Ensembles, this room has been a stage for some of the Nation's most accomplished classical musicians.

Now, if any of you in the audience are newcomers to classical music and aren't sure when to applaud, don't be nervous. *[Laughter]* Apparently, President Kennedy had the same problem. *[Laughter]* He and Jackie held several classical music events here, and more than once he started applauding when he wasn't supposed to. *[Laughter]* So the social secretary

worked out a system where she'd signal him—*[laughter]*—through a crack in the door to the Cross Hall.

Now, fortunately, I have Michelle to tell me when to applaud. *[Laughter]* The rest of you are on your own. *[Laughter]*

This is, of course, a unique concert venue. But tonight, all across America, in community centers and concert halls, in homes and in schools, the sounds of classical music are lifting hearts and spurring imagination, just as they always have. And it's easy to understand why. There's precision, of course, but there's also great feeling and improvisation. There's structure, but there's also creativity. It's music that defies simple definition even as it speaks to a common, universal language.

So whether you are new to classical music, or have been an aficionado for many, many years, we hope that you enjoy tonight.

Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musicians Yo-Yo Ma and Harvey L. "Van" Cliburn, Jr.

## Remarks at the Opening of the White House Tribal Nations Conference and a Discussion With Tribal Leaders November 5, 2009

*The President.* Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. Thank you to Jefferson Keel, thanks for the wonderful introduction; to Clarence Jackson for the invocation. Good morning to all of you. I am honored to be with you today at this unique and historic event, the largest and most widely attended gathering of tribal leaders in our history. And I am so grateful to many Members of Congress who could join us today, along with several members of my Cabinet who will be participating in this conference today.

You know, a couple of summers ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Crow Nation in Montana. And while I was there, I was adopted into the nation by a wonderful couple, Hartford and Mary Black Eagle. And I know what they're saying now: "Kids grow up so

fast." *[Laughter]* Only in America could the adoptive son of Crow Indians grow up to become President of the United States.

It's now been a year since the American people went to the polls and gave me this extraordinary privilege and responsibility. And part of what accounts for the hope people felt on that day, I think, was a sense that we had an opportunity to change the way Washington worked, a chance to make our Federal Government the servant not of special interests, but of the American people. It was a sense that we had an opportunity to bring about meaningful change for those who had for too long been excluded from the American Dream.

And few have been more marginalized and ignored by Washington for as long as Native Americans, our first Americans. We know the