

to accomplish. We are grateful for the friendship between the people of the United States and Botswana. And I'm looking forward to continuing that strong partnership in the years to come.

So welcome.

President Khama. Thank you very much. I certainly passed on my appreciation to President Obama for having had the opportunity to meet with him and to share views about the bilateral cooperation that we have had between our two countries: areas on trades, areas on health, and also to share how both countries are tackling this current economic downturn.

And we also had the opportunities to talk about environmental issues, climate change, and the upcoming Copenhagen summit. And lastly, also about regional issues and how we can try and go about entrenching democracy both in the mindset and the way we go about all our activities on the continent, the African Union in particular.

And I would just like to thank you, Mr. President, once again for having given me this opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Thank you very much.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:33 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks at the Closing of the White House Tribal Nations Conference *November 5, 2009*

Please, everybody have a seat. Let me first of all just thank Ken and the entire Department of the Interior staff for organizing just an extraordinary conference. I want to thank my Cabinet members and senior administration officials who participated today. I hear that Dr. Joe Medicine Crow was around, and so I want to give a shout-out to that Congressional Medal of Honor [Presidential Medal of Freedom]^{*} winner. Good to see you.

My understanding is, is that you had an extremely productive conference. I want to thank all of you for coming and for your efforts, and I want to give you my solemn guarantee that this is not the end of a process but a beginning of a process, and that we are going to follow up. We are going to follow up. Every single member of my team understands that this is a top priority for us. I want you to know that, as I said this morning, this is not something that we just give lip service to. And we are going to keep on working with you to make sure that the first Americans get the best possible chances in life in a way that's consistent with your extraordinary traditions and culture and values.

Shootings at Fort Hood Army Base in Texas

Now, I have to say, though, that beyond that, I had planned to make some broader remarks about the challenges that lay ahead for Native Americans, as well as collaboration with our administration, but as some of you might have heard, there has been a tragic shooting at the Fort Hood Army base in Texas. We don't yet know all the details at this moment; we will share them as we get them. What we do know is that a number of American soldiers have been killed and even more have been wounded in a horrific outburst of violence.

My immediate thoughts and prayers are with the wounded and with the families of the fallen, and with those who live and serve at Fort Hood. And these are men and women who have made the selfless and courageous decision to risk and at times give their lives to protect the rest of us on a daily basis. It's difficult enough when we lose these brave Americans in battles overseas. It is horrifying that they should come under fire at an Army base on American soil.

^{*} White House correction.

I've spoken to Secretary Gates and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, and I will continue to receive a constant stream of updates as new information comes in. We are working with the Pentagon, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security, all to ensure that Fort Hood is secure, and we will continue to support the community with the full resources of the Federal Government.

In the meantime, I would ask all Americans to keep the men and women of Fort Hood in your thoughts and prayers. We will make sure that we get answers to every single question about this horrible incident. And I want all of you to know that as Commander in Chief, there's no greater honor but also no greater responsibility for me than to make sure that the extraordinary men and women in uniform are

properly cared for and that their safety and security when they are at home is provided for.

So we are going to stay on this. But I hope in the meantime that all of you recognize the scope of this tragedy and keep everybody in their thoughts and prayers.

Again, thank you for your participation here today. I am confident that this is going to be resulting in terrific work between this Government and your governments in the weeks, the months, and years to come. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:02 p.m. at the Department of the Interior. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of the Interior Kenneth L. Salazar; and Crow historian and author Joseph Medicine Crow.

Remarks on Signing the Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009

November 6, 2009

Shootings at Fort Hood Army Base in Texas

Good morning. I want to begin by offering an update on the tragedy that took place yesterday at Fort Hood.

This morning I met with FBI Director Mueller and the relevant agencies to discuss their ongoing investigation into what caused one individual to turn his gun on fellow service men and women. We don't know all the answers yet, and I would caution against jumping to conclusions until we have all the facts.

What we do know is that there are families, friends, and an entire nation grieving right now for the valiant men and women who came under attack yesterday in one of the worst mass shootings ever to take place on an American military base. So from now until Veterans Day, I've ordered the flags at the White House and other Federal buildings to be flown at halfstaff. This is a modest tribute to those who lost their lives even as many were preparing to risk their lives for their country. And it's also recognition of the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to protect our

safety and uphold our values. We honor their service, we stand in awe of their sacrifice, and we pray for the safety of those who fight and for the families of those who have fallen. And as we continue to learn more about what happened at Fort Hood, this administration will continue to provide you updates in the coming days and weeks.

Now, I would also like to announce that I just signed into law a bill that will help grow our economy, save and create new jobs, and provide relief to struggling families and businesses. The need for such a measure was made clear by the jobs report that we received this morning. Although we lost fewer jobs than we did last month, our unemployment rate climbed to over 10 percent, a sobering number that underscores the economic challenges that lie ahead.

When we first came into office, our immediate goal was to stop the freefall that caused our economy to shrink at an alarming rate. We have succeeded in achieving that goal, as our economy grew last quarter for the first time in a year. But history tells us that job growth