

Qaida terrorist organization; and Army psychiatrist Maj. Nidal M. Hasan, suspected gunman in the November 5 shootings at Fort Hood, TX.

The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *November 11, 2009*

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Secretary Shinseki, for the generous introduction, more importantly, the extraordinary bravery in service to our country, both on and off the battlefield. I want to thank our outstanding Vice President, Joe Biden, and his wonderful wife, Dr. Jill Biden, for being here today. We want to thank the Bidens for their son, Beau's, service as well; we're glad he just got back from Iraq.

We want to say a special word of thanks to Brigadier General Karl Horst, who's the commander of the Military District of Washington, for being here, and for your lifetime of distinguished service to our Nation. To Gene Crayton, president of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, thank you for being here, and to all the veterans service organizations for the extraordinary work, day in, day out on behalf of our Nation's heroes.

To the members of our Armed Forces and the veterans who are here today, I am deeply honored and humbled to spend Veterans Day with you in this sacred place where generations of heroes have come to rest and generations of Americans have come to show their gratitude.

There are many honors and responsibilities that come with this job, but none is more profound than serving as Commander in Chief. Yesterday I visited the troops at Fort Hood. We gathered in remembrance of those we recently lost. We paid tribute to the lives they led. There was something that I saw in them, something that I see in the eyes of every soldier and sailor, airman, marine, and coast guardsman that I have had the privilege to meet in this country and around the world, and that thing is determination.

In this time of war, we gather here mindful that the generation serving today already deserves a place alongside previous generations for the courage they have shown and the sacrifices that they have made. In an era where so

many acted only in pursuit of narrow self-interest, they've chosen the opposite. They chose to serve the cause that is greater than self, many even after they knew they'd be sent into harm's way. And for the better part of a decade, they have endured tour after tour in distant and difficult places, they have protected us from danger, and they have given others the opportunity for a better life.

So to all of them—to our veterans, to the fallen, and to their families—there is no tribute, no commemoration, no praise that can truly match the magnitude of your service and your sacrifice.

This is a place where it is impossible not to be moved by that sacrifice. But even as we gather here this morning, people are gathering all across America, not only to express thanks of a grateful nation, but to tell stories that demand to be told. They're stories of wars whose names have come to define eras, battles that echo throughout history. They're stories of patriots who sacrificed in pursuit of a more perfect union: of a grandfather who marched across Europe, of a friend who fought in Vietnam, of a sister who served in Iraq. They're the stories of generations of Americans who left home barely more than boys and girls, became men and women, and returned home heroes.

And when these Americans who had dedicated their lives to defending this country came home, many settled on a life of service, choosing to make their entire lives a tour of duty. Many chose to live a quiet life, trading one uniform and set of responsibilities for another: doctor, engineer, teacher, mom, dad. They bought homes, raised families, built businesses. They built the greatest middle class that the world has ever known. Some put away their medals, stayed humble about their service, and moved on. Some, carrying shrapnel and scars, found that they couldn't.

We call this a holiday. But for many veterans, it's another day of memories that drive them to live their lives each day as best as they possibly can. For our troops, it is another day in harm's way. For their families, it is another day to feel the absence of a loved one and the concern for their safety. For our wounded warriors, it is another day of slow and arduous recovery. And in this national cemetery, it is another day when grief remains fresh. So while it is important and proper that we mark this day, it is far more important we spend all our days determined to keep the promises that we've made to all who answer this country's call.

Carved into the marble behind me are the words of our first Commander in Chief: "When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen." Just as the contributions that our service men and women make to this Nation don't end when they take off their uniform, neither do our obligations to them. And when we fulfill those obligations, we aren't just keeping faith with our veterans; we are keeping faith with the ideals of service and sacrifice upon which this Republic was founded.

If we're honest with ourselves, we'll admit that there have been times where we as a nation have betrayed that sacred trust. Our Vietnam veterans served with great honor. They often came home greeted not with gratitude or support, but with condemnation and neglect. That's something that will never happen again. To them and to all who have served, in every battle, in every war, we say that it's never too late to say thank you. We honor your service; we are forever grateful. And just as you have not forgotten your missing comrades, neither, ever, will we. Our service men and women have been doing right by America for generations. And as long as I am Commander in Chief, America's going to do right by them.

That is my message to all veterans today. That is my message to all who serve in harm's way. To the husbands and wives back home doing the parenting of two, to the parents who

watch their sons and daughters go off to war and the children who wonder when mom and dad is coming home, to all our wounded warriors, and to the families who laid a loved one to rest, America will not let you down. We will take care of our own.

And to those who are serving in far-flung places today, when your tour ends, when you see our flag, when you touch our soil, you will be home in an America that is forever here for you just as you've been there for us. That is my promise—our Nation's promise—to you.

Ninety-one years ago today, the battlefields of Europe fell quiet as World War I came to a close. But we don't mark this day each year as a celebration of victory, as proud of that victory as we are. We mark this day as a celebration of those who made victory possible. It's a day we keep in our minds the brave men and women of this young Nation—generations of them—who above all else believed in and fought for a set of ideals. Because they did, our country still stands, our founding principles still shine, nations around the world that once knew nothing but fear now know the blessings of freedom.

That is why we fight—in hopes of a day when we no longer need to. And that is why we gather at these solemn remembrances and reminders of war—to recommit ourselves to the hard work of peace.

There will be a day before long when this generation of service men and women step out of uniform. They will build families and lives of their own. God willing, they will grow old. And someday, their children and their children's children will gather here to honor them.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. in the Amphitheatre at Arlington National Cemetery. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act November 11, 2009

Today I have signed into law S. 475, the “Military Spouses Residency Relief Act”. This Act, among other things, would provide that when a service member leaves his or her home State in accord with military or naval orders, the service member’s spouse may retain residency in his or her home State for voting and tax purposes, after relocating from that State to accompany the service member.

When the military orders service members to move, spouses who move with them often have to pay taxes in a new State or locality and lose the right to vote in the place considered to be home. This legislation will alleviate these and other burdens on our military families. As the

Congress has recognized, and as the legislative history reflects, this legislation is an important means of maintaining the morale and readiness of our Armed Forces and significantly enhances the ability of our military to effectively recruit and retain these highly valued service personnel.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
November 11, 2009.

NOTE: S. 475, approved November 11, was assigned Public Law No. 111–97.

Memorandum on Inventory of Files Related to Fort Hood Shooting November 10, 2009

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: Inventory of Files Related to Fort Hood Shooting

On November 6, 2009, I directed that an immediate inventory be conducted of all intelligence in U.S. Government files that existed prior to November 6, 2009, relevant to the tragic shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, especially anything having to do with the alleged shooter, Major Nidal Malik Hasan, U.S. Army. In addition, I directed an immediate review be initiated to determine how any such intelligence was handled, shared, and acted upon within individual departments and agencies and what intelligence

was shared with others. This inventory and review shall be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with the ongoing criminal investigations of the Fort Hood shooting.

The results of this inventory and review, as well as any recommendations for improvements to procedures and practices, shall be provided to John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, who will serve as the principal point of contact on this matter for the White House. Preliminary results of this review shall be provided by November 30, 2009.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 12.

Remarks on the National Economy November 12, 2009

Good morning, everybody. Before departing for Asia this morning, I’d like to make a brief statement about the economy. Over the past 10 months, we’ve taken a number of bold steps to break the back of this recession. We’ve worked

to stabilize the financial system, revive lending to small businesses and families, and prevent responsible homeowners from losing their homes. And through the Recovery Act, we’ve cut taxes for middle class families, extended and