

ing all those who have ever worn the uniform of this country—and their families—as well as they have served us.

On April 25, 1866, about a year after the Civil War ended, a group of women visited a cemetery in Columbus, Mississippi, to place flowers by the graves of Confederate soldiers who had fallen at Shiloh. As they did, they noticed other graves nearby belonging to Union dead. But no one had come to visit those graves or place a flower there. So they decided to lay a few stems for those men too, in recognition not of a fallen Confederate or a fallen Union soldier, but a fallen American.

A few years later, an organization of Civil War veterans established what became Memorial Day, selecting a date that coincided with the time when flowers were in bloom. So this weekend, as we commemorate Memorial Day, I ask you to hold all our fallen heroes in your hearts and, if you can, lay a flower where they have come to rest.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:55 p.m. on May 27 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on May 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 29.

Statement on the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico *May 29, 2010*

Today I've spoken with National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen, as well as Energy Secretary Steven Chu, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, and senior White House advisers John Brennan and Carol Browner regarding the ongoing efforts to stop the BP oil spill. From the beginning, our concern has been that the surest way to stop the flow of oil—the drilling of relief wells—would take several months to complete. So engineers and experts have explored a variety of alternatives to stop the leak now. They had hoped that the top kill approach attempted this week would halt the flow of oil and gas currently escaping from the seafloor. But while we initially received optimistic reports about the procedure, it is now clear that it has not worked. Rear Admiral Mary Landry today directed BP to launch a new procedure whereby the riser pipe will be cut and a containment structure fitted over the leak.

This approach is not without risk and has never been attempted before at this depth. That is why it was not activated until other methods had been exhausted. It will be difficult and will take several days. It is also important to note that while we were hopeful that the top kill would succeed, we were also mindful that there was a significant chance it would not. And we will continue to pursue any and all responsible means of stopping this leak until the completion of the two relief wells currently being drilled.

As I said yesterday, every day that this leak continues is an assault on the people of the Gulf Coast region, their livelihoods, and the natural bounty that belongs to all of us. It is as enraging as it is heartbreaking, and we will not relent until this leak is contained, until the waters and shores are cleaned up, and until the people unjustly victimized by this manmade disaster are made whole.

Remarks on Memorial Day at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland *May 31, 2010*

Hello, everybody. First of all, I want to just say thank you to Colonel Steve Shepro, who's

just done such great work for us and for me over the last several months, several years. I