

Rangers who took the cliffs on D-day: “These are the heroes who helped end a war.”

I would ask all of our Rangers, members of the 9/11 generation, to stand and accept the thanks of a grateful nation.

Finally, the service of Leroy Petry speaks to the very essence of America, that spirit that says, no matter how hard the journey, no matter how steep the climb, we don’t quit. We don’t give up. Leroy lost a hand, and those wounds in his legs sometimes make it hard for him to stand. But he pushes on, and even joined his fellow Rangers for a grueling 20-mile march. He could have focused only on his own recovery, but today he helps care for other wounded warriors, inspiring them with his example. Given his wounds, he could have retired from the Army, with honor, but he chose to reenlist, indefinitely. And this past year he returned to Afghanistan—his eighth deployment—back with his Ranger brothers on another mission to keep our country safe.

This is the stuff of which heroes are made. This is the strength, the devotion that makes our troops the pride of every American. And this is the reason that, like a soldier named Leroy Petry, America doesn’t simply endure, we emerge from our trials stronger, more confident, with our eyes fixed on the future.

Our heroes are all around us. And as we prepare for the reading of the citation, please join me in saluting one of those heroes, Leroy Petry.

[*At this point, Maj. Reginald McClam, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

The President. Can you give Leroy a big round of applause?

[*Brig. Gen. Donald L. Rutherford, USA, Army Deputy Chief of Chaplains, said a prayer.*]

The President. Thank you all for attending this extraordinary ceremony for this extraordinary hero. I hope that all of you will join the family. There is going to be an outstanding reception. I hear the food is pretty good around here. [*Laughter*] And I know the music is great because we’ve got my own Marine Band playing.

So thank you so much for your attendance. And once again, congratulations, Leroy, for your extraordinary devotion to our country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Pfc. Lucas Robinson, USA, and Sgt. Daniel Higgins, USA, D Company, 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment; Edward F. Gathercole, brother, Jennifer Daly, sister, and Maryann Haines, grandmother, of Spc. Christopher Gathercole, USA; and Brittany Velotta, Austin West, and Reagan West, stepchildren, Lorella Tapia, mother, and Larry, Lloyd, and Lincoln Petry, brothers, of Sfc. Petry.

Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in Mumbai, India

July 13, 2011

I strongly condemn the outrageous attacks in Mumbai, and my thoughts and prayers are with the wounded and those who have lost loved ones. The U.S. Government continues to monitor the situation, including the safety and security of our citizens. India is a close friend and partner of the United States. The American people

will stand with the Indian people in times of trial, and we will offer support to India’s efforts to bring the perpetrators of these terrible crimes to justice. During my trip to Mumbai, I saw firsthand the strength and resilience of the Indian people, and I have no doubt that India will overcome these deplorable terrorist attacks.

Statement on the Election of Janice K. Hahn to the United States House of Representatives

July 13, 2011

I want to extend my congratulations to Congresswoman-elect Janice Hahn for her victory in California's 36th Congressional District. Janice and I both believe that in order to win the future, we need to create jobs and grow our economy and pursue a balanced approach

to deficit reduction. In Congress, Janice will continue to fight for the people of the South Bay and add another chapter to her family's long history of dedicated service to the people of California. I look forward to working with her.

The President's News Conference

July 15, 2011

The President. Hello, everybody. As you know, yesterday we had another meeting with the congressional leaders. We're not having one today, so I thought it would be useful to give you guys an update on where we are.

All the congressional leaders have reiterated the desire to make sure that the United States does not default on our obligations and that the full faith and credit of the United States is preserved. That is a good thing. I think we should not even be this close to a deadline on this issue; this should have been taken care of earlier. But it is encouraging that everybody believes that this is something that has to be addressed.

And for the general public—I've said this before but I just want to reiterate—this is not some abstract issue. These are obligations that the United States has taken on in the past. Congress has run up the credit card, and we now have an obligation to pay our bills. If we do not, it could have a whole set of adverse consequences. We could end up with a situation, for example, where interest rates rise for everybody all throughout the country, effectively a tax increase on everybody, because suddenly, whether you're using your credit card or you're trying to get a loan for a car or a student loan, businesses that are trying to make payroll, all of them could end up being impacted as a consequence of a default.

Now, what is important is that even as we raise the debt ceiling, we also solve the problem of underlying debt and deficits. I'm glad

that congressional leaders don't want to default, but I think the American people expect more than that. They expect that we actually try to solve this problem, we get our fiscal house in order.

And so during the course of these discussions with congressional leaders, what I've tried to emphasize is we have a unique opportunity to do something big. We have a chance to stabilize America's finances for a decade, for 15 years or 20 years, if we're willing to seize the moment.

Now, what that would require would be some shared sacrifice and a balanced approach that says we're going to make significant cuts in domestic spending. And I have already said I am willing to take down domestic spending to the lowest percentage of our overall economy since Dwight Eisenhower.

It also requires cuts in defense spending, and I've said that in addition to the \$400 billion that we've already cut from defense spending, we're willing to look for hundreds of billions more.

It would require us taking on health care spending. And that includes looking at Medicare and finding ways that we can stabilize the system so that it is available not just for this generation, but for future generations.

And it would require revenues. It would require, even as we're asking the person who needs a student loan or the senior citizen or people—veterans who are trying to get by on a disability check, even as we're trying to make