

And we just had a very productive discussion where we discussed how we can build on both the political progress, the economic progress, and address the security challenges that continue to confront Africa. And I emphasized that the United States has been and will continue to be a stalwart partner with them in this process of democratization and development.

Despite the impressive work of all these gentlemen, I've said before and I think they all agree: Africa does not need strongmen, Africa needs strong institutions. So we are working with them as partners to build effective judiciaries, strong civil societies, legislators that are effective and inclusive, making sure that human rights are protected.

With respect to economic development, all of us agree that we can't keep on duplicating a approach that breeds dependence, but rather, we need to embrace an approach that creates sustainability and capacity within each of these countries through trade and investment and the development of human capital and the education of young people throughout these countries.

We discussed as well that not only do we want to encourage trade between the United States and each of these respective countries, but we want to encourage inter-African and regional trade, and that requires investments in infrastructure in those areas.

We are partners in resolving conflicts peacefully and have worked effectively with ECOWAS and the African Union to resolve crisis—crises in the region. And we appreciate very much the assistance that we've received on battling terrorism

that currently is trying to gain a foothold inside of Africa.

And finally, we discussed how we can partner together to avert the looming humanitarian crisis in eastern Africa. And I think it hasn't gotten as much attention here in the United States as it deserves, but we're starting to see famine developing in—along the Horn of Africa, in areas like Somalia in particular. And that's going to require an international response, and Africa will have to be a partner in making sure that tens of thousands of people do not starve to death.

So let me just close by saying that many of the countries here are—either have celebrated or are in the process of celebrating their 50th year of independence. As President Issoufou pointed out, I'm also celebrating my 50th year of at least existence. *[Laughter]*

And when we think about the extraordinary progress that's been made, I think there's much we can be proud of. But of course, when we think about the last 50 years, we also have to recognize there have been a lot of opportunities missed. And so these leaders, I think, are absolutely committed to making sure that 50 years from now they can say that they helped to turn the tide in their countries, to establish strong, democratic practices, to help establish economic prosperity and security. And we just want you to know the United States will stand with you every step of the way.

Thank you very much, everyone.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 July 29, 2011

A year ago today, I was proud to sign the Tribal Law and Order Act into law. American Indians and Alaska Natives have long been victimized by violent crime at far higher rates than the rest of the country, and the Tribal Law and Order Act is already helping us better address the unique public safety challenges that confront tribal communities. Over the past

year, tribes have gained greater sentencing authority. The rights of defendants are stronger. Services for victims are better. We're working together to combat alcohol and drug abuse and to help at-risk youth in more effective ways. We've established new guidelines and training for officers handling domestic violence and sex crimes. And we've expanded recruitment and

retention of Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal officers and given them better access to the criminal databases they need to keep people safe. These are important steps in addressing

serious issues. And as long as I am President, we will continue to strengthen and fortify our government-to-government relationship with Indian Country.

The President's Weekly Address *July 30, 2011*

Today I'd like to speak with you about the ongoing and urgent efforts to avoid a first-ever default and get our fiscal house in order.

Republicans in the House of Representatives just spent precious days trying to pass a plan that a majority of Republicans and Democrats in the Senate had already said they wouldn't vote for. It's a plan that wouldn't solve our fiscal problems, but would force us to relive this crisis in just a few short months. It would hold our economy captive to Washington politics once again. If anything, the past few weeks have demonstrated that's not acceptable.

Any solution to avoid default must be bipartisan. It must have the support of both parties that were sent here to represent the American people, not just one faction of one party. There are multiple ways to resolve this problem. Congress must find common ground on a plan that can get support from both parties in the House and in the Senate. And it's got to be a plan that I can sign by Tuesday.

The parties are not that far apart here. We're in rough agreement on how much spending we need to cut to reduce our deficit. And we agree on a process to tackle tax reform and entitlement reform. There are plenty of ways out of this mess. But there is very little time.

We need to reach a compromise by Tuesday so that our country will have the ability to pay its bills on time, bills like Social Security checks, veterans' benefits, and contracts we've signed with thousands of American businesses. If we don't, for the first time ever, we could lose our country's AAA credit rating. Not because we didn't have the capacity to pay our bills—we do—but because we didn't have a AAA political system to match it. And make no mistake, for those who reflexively oppose tax increases on anyone, a lower credit rating

would be a tax increase on everyone; we'd all pay higher interest rates on mortgages and car loans and credit cards.

That would be inexcusable and entirely self-inflicted by Washington. The power to solve this is in our hands. All that's needed is a simple vote that Democrats and Republicans have taken for decades, including all of the leaders in Congress today. It was done 18 times under President Reagan, 7 times under George W. Bush. And it must be done again now. It's not a vote that allows Congress to spend more money. Raising the debt ceiling simply gives our country the ability to pay the bills that Congress has already racked up, it gives the United States of America the ability to keep its word, and it lets businesses and our economy breathe a sigh of relief.

On Monday night, I asked you to make your voice heard in this debate, and the response was overwhelming. One of the e-mails we received was from a woman named Kelly Smith, who wanted to send this message to Washington. "I keep my home clean," Kelly wrote. "I work hard at a full-time job, give my parents any monies I can so they can afford their medications, I pay my bills, and by all appearances, I am a responsible person. All I'm asking is that you be responsible. I have my house in order, and all I'm asking is that you get yours the same way."

Here in Washington, we need to get our house in order. And I have to say, Democrats in Congress and some Senate Republicans have been listening and have shown themselves willing to make compromises to solve this crisis. Now all of us, including Republicans in the House of Representatives, need to demonstrate the same kind of responsibility that the American people show every day. The time for putting party first is over. The time for compromise on behalf of the American people is now.