

And so we're glad to have Hala Baig here today.

They are faith leaders like Sanaa Nadim, one of the first Muslim chaplains at an American college, a voice for interfaith dialogue who's had the opportunity to meet with the Pope to discuss these issues. We're very proud to have you here.

They are educators like Auysha Muhayya, born in Afghanistan, who fled with her family as refugees to America and now, as a language teacher, helps open her students to new cultures. So we're very pleased to have her here.

They are entrepreneurs and lawyers, community leaders, members of our military, and Muslim American women serving with distinction in government. And that includes a good friend, Huma Abedin, who has worked tirelessly in the White House, in the U.S. Senate, and most exhaustingly, at the State Department, where she has been nothing less than extraordinary in representing our country and the democratic values that we hold dear. Senator Clinton has relied on her expertise, and so have I.

The American people owe her a debt of gratitude because Huma is an American patriot and an example of what we need in this country: more public servants with her sense of decency, her grace, and her generosity of spirit. So, on behalf of all Americans, we thank you so much.

These are the faces of Islam in America. These are just a few of the Muslim Americans who strengthen our country every single day. This is the diversity that makes us Americans, the pluralism that we will never lose.

And at times, we have to admit that this spirit is threatened. We've seen instances of mosques and synagogues, churches and temples being targeted. Tonight our prayers, in particular, are with our friends and fellow Americans in the Sikh community. We mourn

those who were senselessly murdered and injured in their place of worship. And while we may never fully understand what motivates such hatred, such violence, the perpetrators of such despicable acts must know that your twisted thinking is no match for the compassion and the goodness and the strength of our united American family.

So tonight we declare with one voice that such violence has no place in the United States of America. The attack on Americans of any faith is an attack on the freedom of all Americans. No American should ever have to fear for their safety in their place of worship. And every American has the right to practice their faith both openly and freely, and as they choose.

That is not just an American right, it is a universal human right. And we will defend the freedom of religion here at home and around the world. And as we do, we'll draw on the strength and example of our interfaith community, including the leaders who are here tonight.

So I want to thank all of you for honoring us with your presence, for the example of your lives, and for your commitment to the values that make us "one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sanaa Nadim, chaplain, Interfaith Center at Stony Brook University; Pope Benedict XVI; Auysha Muhayya, upper school language department head, Sidwell Friends School; Huma M. Abedin, former Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of State; and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The President's Weekly Address *August 11, 2012*

Hi, everybody. Today I want to talk about something that most of you already know: It's

hot outside. It's really hot. And if this feels worse than normal, that's because it is. We just

found out that July was the warmest month on record, warmer than any other month since we began keeping track more than a century ago.

On top of all this heat, we're also experiencing one of the worst droughts in over 50 years. Almost a quarter of the continental United States is facing what we call "extreme" or "exceptional" drought, with States like Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas getting hit harder than most.

That's bad news for a lot of people, but it's especially tough on our farmers and ranchers. Right now almost half of the corn crop in America is in poor or very poor condition. Cattlemen are struggling to feed their animals. Many folks are seeing their livelihoods dry up in front of their eyes. And if we don't get relief soon, Americans everywhere will start to feel the pinch, because the food our farmers and ranchers produce ends up on grocery store shelves.

We can't let that happen. That's why, at my direction, the Department of Agriculture, led by Secretary Tom Vilsack, has been working with other agencies across the Federal Government to make sure we're doing everything we can to help farmers and ranchers fight back and recover from this disaster. Already, we've given farmers and small businesses across 32 States access to low-interest emergency loans.

We've opened up more Federal land for grazing. And we're working with crop insurance companies to give farmers a short grace period on their premiums, since some families will be struggling to make ends meet at the end of the year.

This past week, we went even further, announcing an additional \$30 million to help get more water to livestock and restore land affected by the drought. We're making it easier for even more farmers, ranchers, and business owners to get emergency loans. And the De-

partment of Transportation is helping more truck drivers deliver supplies to States that need them the most.

This is an all-hands-on-deck response, and we'll be doing even more in the coming weeks to help families and communities that are suffering.

But my administration can't do it alone. Congress needs to do its part too. They need to pass a farm bill that not only helps farmers and ranchers respond to these kinds of disasters, but also makes necessary reforms and gives them some certainty year round. That's the single best way we can help rural communities right now and also in the long term.

So call your Members of Congress, write them an e-mail, and tell them that now is the time to come together and get this done. Too many Americans are suffering right now to let politics get in the way. Let's help farmers, ranchers, and business owners recover. Let's make sure that families who already stretch their budgets to the limit don't have to pay more for groceries this fall.

In the meantime, I'll keep doing everything I can to help communities respond to this disaster. Because at times like these, it doesn't matter if you live in Des Moines or Detroit, we're Americans first. And if we look out for each other, we'll come out of this stronger than before.

Have a great weekend, everybody. And stay cool.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:50 p.m. on August 10 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 11.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Chicago, Illinois August 12, 2012

The President. Hello, Chicago! Thank you! How's everybody doing? It is good to be back

home. Chicago looks good. And all of you look good.