

speak out against not just acts of violence, but also those interpretations of Islam that are incompatible with the values of religious tolerance, mutual respect, and human dignity.

But just as it is the responsibility of Muslims around the world to root out misguided ideas that lead to radicalization, it is the responsibility of all Americans, of every faith, to reject discrimination. It is our responsibility to reject religious tests on who we admit into this country. It's our responsibility to reject proposals that Muslim Americans should somehow be treated differently. Because when we travel down that road, we lose. That kind of divisiveness, that betrayal of our values, plays into the hands of groups like ISIL. Muslim Americans are our friends and our neighbors, our coworkers, our sports heroes. And yes, they are our men and women in uniform who are willing to die in defense of our country. We have to remember that.

My fellow Americans, I am confident we will succeed in this mission because we are on the right side of history. We were founded upon a belief in human dignity, that no matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or what religion you practice, you

are equal in the eyes of God and equal in the eyes of the law.

Even in this political season, even as we properly debate what steps I and future Presidents must take to keep our country safe, let's make sure we never forget what makes us exceptional. Let's not forget that freedom is more powerful than fear; that we have always met challenges—whether war or depression, natural disasters or terrorist attacks—by coming together around our common ideals as one Nation and one people. So long as we stay true to that tradition, I have no doubt America will prevail.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, suspected perpetrators of the terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, CA, on December 2; and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was convicted for his role in the Boston Marathon bombing of April 15, 2013. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the United States-Jordan Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters *December 8, 2015*

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on October 1, 2013. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties negotiated by the United States to more effectively counter criminal activities. The Treaty should enhance

our ability to investigate and prosecute a wide variety of crimes.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Under the Treaty, the Parties agree to assist each other by, among other things: producing evidence (such as testimony, documents, or items) obtained voluntarily or, where necessary, by compulsion; arranging for persons, including persons in custody, to travel to another country to provide evidence; serving documents; executing searches and seizures; locating and identifying persons or items; and freezing and forfeiting assets or property that may be the proceeds or instrumentalities of crime.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 8, 2015.

Remarks Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment *December 9, 2015*

“In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free.” That’s what President Lincoln once wrote. “Honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth.”

Mr. Speaker, leaders and Members of both parties, distinguished guests: We gather here to commemorate a century and a half of freedom, not simply for former slaves, but for all of us.

Today, the issue of chattel slavery seems so simple, so obvious. It is wrong in every sense. Stealing men, women, and children from their homelands. Tearing husbands from wife, parent from child; stripped and sold to the highest bidder; shackled in chains and bloodied with the whip. It’s antithetical not only to our conception of human rights and dignity, but to our conception of ourselves: a people founded on the premise that all are created equal.

And to many at the time, that judgment was clear as well. Preachers, Black and White, railed against this moral outrage from the pulpit. Former slaves rattled the conscience of Americans in books, in pamphlets, and speeches. Men and women organized antislavery conventions and fundraising drives. Farmers and shopkeepers opened their barns, their homes, their cellars as waystations on an Underground Railroad, where African Americans often risked their own freedom to ensure the freedom of others. And enslaved Americans, with no rights of their own, they ran North and kept the flame of freedom burning, passing it from one generation to the next, with their faith and their dignity and their song.

The reformers’ passion only drove the protectors of the status quo to dig in harder. And for decades, America wrestled with the issue of slavery in a way that we have with no other, before or since. It shaped our politics, and it

nearly tore us asunder. Tensions ran so high, so personal, that at one point, a lawmaker was beaten unconscious on the Senate floor. Eventually, war broke out, brother against brother, North against South.

At its heart, the question of slavery was never simply about civil rights, it was about the meaning of America, the kind of country we wanted to be, whether this Nation might fulfill the call of its birth: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,” that among those are life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

President Lincoln understood that if we were ever to fully realize that founding promise, it meant not just signing an Emancipation Proclamation, not just winning a war, it meant making the most powerful collective statement we can in our democracy: etching our values into our Constitution. He called it “a King’s cure for all the evils.”

A hundred and fifty years proved the cure to be necessary, but not sufficient. Progress proved halting, too often deferred. Newly freed slaves may have been liberated by the letter of the law, but their daily lives told another tale. They couldn’t vote. They couldn’t fill most occupations. They couldn’t protect themselves or their families from indignity or from violence. And so abolitionists and freed men and women and radical Republicans kept cajoling and kept rabble-raising, and within a few years of the war’s end at Appomattox, we passed two more amendments guaranteeing voting rights, birthright citizenship, equal protection under the law.

And still, it wasn’t enough. For another century, we saw segregation and Jim Crow make a mockery of these amendments. And we saw