

[Lt. Cmdr. Lawlor read the remaining citations, and the President presented the medals, assisted by Lt. Cmdr. Nadolny.]

The President. Those are our honorees. Let's give them a big round of applause again. [Applause] Hey! Well, once again, we thank them for their extraordinary contributions. We look forward to all the work they will be doing in the future.

Just a couple of other comments. One, I think Louise Glück has the coolest outfit—[laughter]—especially those spiked sneakers. I'm glad that Audra is already a good friend of mine. [Laughter] So the fact that they kind of left out the citation, I think she'll forgive me. And I do think Mel Brooks kind of set the tone for this thing—[laughter]—because, historically, this has been a much more staid affair. [Laughter] But somehow, I think my quote of him in the beginning, it threw everything off. [Laughter]

Everybody, have fun. Enjoy the reception. Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:49 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his re-

marks, he referred to writer, actor, filmmaker, and playwright Mel Brooks; Terry Gross, host and co-executive producer, NPR's "Fresh Air" program; Louise Glück, adjunct professor of English and RosenKranz Writer in Residence, Yale University; José Ramón Andrés Puerta, chef/owner, ThinkFoodGroup; historian Ron Chernow; writer Sandra Cisneros; Berry Gordy, Jr., founder, Motown Records; musicians Santiago Jiménez, Jr., and Wynton Marsalis; playwrights and directors Moisés Kaufman and Luis Valdez; choreographer and dancer Ralph Lemon; author, musician, and screenwriter James McBride; Louis Menand, Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of English, Harvard University; Elaine Pagels, Harrington Spear Paine Foundation Professor of Religion, Princeton University; Abraham Verghese, Linda R. Meier and Joan F. Lane Provostial Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine; painter Jack Whitten; and actor Morgan Freeman. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Accession of Montenegro to the North Atlantic Treaty September 22, 2016

Dear Mr. Chairman: (Dear Senator:) (Dear Representative:)

Pursuant to section 3(2)(E)(i) of the Resolution of Ratification to the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic adopted on April 30, 1998, I am pleased to submit the enclosed report.

In doing so, I reiterate my appreciation for efforts to work with me in advancing a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

As provided in the Resolution, the enclosed report includes:

(I) An evaluation of how Montenegro will further the principles of the North Atlan-

tic Treaty and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area;

(II) An evaluation of the eligibility of Montenegro for membership based on the principles and criteria identified by NATO and the United States, including the military readiness of the country;

(III) An explanation of how an invitation to Montenegro would affect the national security interests of the United States;

(IV) A United States Government analysis of the common-funded military requirements and costs associated with integrating Montenegro into NATO and an analysis of the shares of those costs to be borne by NATO members, including the United States;

(V) A preliminary analysis of the implications for the United States defense budget and other United States budgets of integrating Montenegro into NATO; and (VI) An analysis of Montenegro's ability to meet the full range of the financial burdens of NATO membership, and the likely impact upon the military effectiveness of NATO of Montenegro, if Montenegro were to be admitted to NATO.

This report is in both classified and unclassified forms, as provided in the Resolution.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to W. Thad Cochran, chairman, and Barbara A. Mikulski, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; John S. McCain III, chairman, and John F. Reed, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Robert P. Corker, Jr., chairman, and Benjamin L. Cardin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Nita M. Lowey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; W. McClellan "Mac" Thornberry, chairman, and D. Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Edward R. Royce, chairman, and Eliot L. Engel, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Remarks at a Reception Celebrating the Opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture September 23, 2016

The President. Well, welcome, everybody. This is an exceptionally good-looking group. [Laughter] And there are just so many friends here that it feels like one of our house parties—[laughter]—but there's no dancing this afternoon. We're here just to acknowledge what an extraordinary achievement has been accomplished by Mr. Lonnie Bunch and everybody who helped make this day possible.

Now, I want to just talk about Lonnie for a second. When Lonnie first came here from Chicago to start work on this museum a decade ago, he could not even find somebody to give him a key to his office. [Laughter] Nobody had heard of this museum. And now you cannot miss it.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. A breathtaking new building right in the heart of the National Mall and that is what we call progress.

Audience member. Yes!

The President. It could not have been done without the persistence, the wisdom, the dedication, the savvy, the ability to make people feel guilty—[laughter]—the begging, the deal-

making, and just the general street smarts of Lonnie—

Audience member. That's right.

The President. —and his entire team. So please give him a big round of applause for all the work that he has done.

But of course, this is also about more than Lonnie. This is about people who for more than a century, advocated and organized and raised funds and donated artifacts so that the story of the African American experience could take its rightful place in our national memory. It's a story that is full of tragedy and setbacks, but also great joy and great victories. And it is a story that is not just part of the past, but it is alive and well today in every corner of America. And that's certainly true today in this house, a house that was built by slaves.

Audience members. Yes. Yes.

The President. Now, I can't name everybody that is here, but I'm going to have to give you a little bit of a taste. This room is like a living museum of its own. Right now Madame Tussauds would be very jealous. [Laughter]