

Chiefs of Staff; former astronaut and physician Mae C. Jemison; musician Aretha Franklin; and

Washington, DC, resident Ruth Odom Bonner and her great-granddaughter Christine.

Remarks During a Teleconference Call With Rabbis on the Observance of Rosh Hashanah September 26, 2016

Well, thank you so much, Rabbi, for the warm introduction. *L'Shanah Tovah* to everybody. Thanks for taking time to join this call. I know it's a busy and important time. I couldn't be more grateful to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Rabbinical Assembly, the Rabbinical Council of America, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Assembly for co-sponsoring this call. And special thanks to Rabbi Jonah Pesner and Barbara Weinstein from the Religious Action Center for coordinating today's conversation.

As Rabbi Matanky noted, Rosh Hashanah is a time for reflection, and I'm not exempt from that. So, looking back on the last 8 years, I'm both proud of what we've accomplished together, but also mindful of the work we have before us.

When it comes to the unshakeable commitment to Israel's security, we've taken a clear stand, and the recent signing of the memorandum of understanding constitutes the single largest pledge of military assistance in U.S. history to any country, totaling \$38 billion over 10 years.

I made a commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and because of our principled diplomacy, every pathway to a nuclear weapon is now closed off. Iran has dismantled two-thirds of its installed centrifuges, shipped out 98 percent of its enriched uranium, rendered its plutonium reactor core unusable, and adopted the most comprehensive nuclear inspection ever.

On the global fight against anti-Semitism, we've worked in partnership with Israel and other countries to take a lead role in organizing the first ever U.N. General Assembly meeting to combat anti-Semitism last year.

And so, on these issues and many others we have worked incredibly closely with many of you, allocating millions in assistance for Holocaust survivors, and ensuring that the U.N. fi-

nally recognized Yom Kippur as an official holiday, and more broadly, working to rebuild a sinking economy, so that we've cut the unemployment rate by more than half, provided health care to 20 million people who didn't have it before, ramped up our production of clean energy, signed a historic Paris Agreement that, hopefully, will curb the accelerating speed at which our planet is warming and could threaten the future of our children and our grandchildren.

Of course, we've still got a lot of work to do: on the refugee crisis, on criminal justice reform, reducing violence, and creating a political culture in this country that's a little more functional. But a new year brings new hope, and the community represented on this phone call has always known what it means to stand up for the less fortunate, the stranger, the immigrant, the refugee. And so I'm confident that we can stand together and make sure that as we pass the baton to the next administration that we're going to be able to build on the enormous progress that we've already made.

And I just want to reemphasize how grateful I am to all of you, not just for the work that the various associations and assemblies and congregations have had on policy issues, but just as importantly, or more importantly, the work that you do in your respective communities every single day to help those in need and to help lift up the values that helped to build this country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:59 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Leonard Matanky, honorary president, Rabbinical Council of America; and Jonah Dov Pesner, director, and Barbara Weinstein, associate director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the White House Tribal Nations Conference September 26, 2016

The President. Hello, everybody. Thank you. Thank you. Well, welcome to the Eighth White House Tribal Nations Conference. And what a amazing honor, and what a kind gesture for the honor song and the blanket and the hat. I have to say that I'm very glad that you also have a blanket for Michelle so she doesn't steal mine. [Laughter] She would too. I'm just saying. [Laughter] But that was very moving and is a reminder of the great friendships that we've developed over the last 8 years.

I have a couple of people here who I want to acknowledge for their longstanding commitment to Indian Country: Sally Jewell, our Secretary of the Interior; Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians. We're honored to have here Thomas Begay, one of the last surviving Navajo Code Talkers. And we have some just amazing young people here that I had a chance to meet earlier, including those who are participating in Generation Indigenous, so please give our young people a big round of applause. We're so proud of them.

So today the most important thing I want to say is thank you. After almost 8 years as your President, I have been so privileged to learn from you and spend time with many of you while visiting more tribal communities than any other President. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe here? Choctaw Nation? Alaska Natives? My trips to your nations and communities are days that I will never forget. We—Michelle and I—still talk about hosting those remarkable young people from Standing Rock Sioux Nation in the White House and taking them out for pizza. [Laughter] My staff still talks about all the wonderful people in Kotzebue, Alaska, who tried to—they tried to teach them Iñupiaq and tried to stuff them full of meat at Cariboufest. [Laughter] And my brothers at Crow Nation, brothers and sisters here, I may be an adopted son of the Crow Nation, but I try not to play favorites. [Laughter] Because I pledged to all of you when I first ran for President that I'd be a partner with all of you in the

spirit of a true nation-to-nation relationship, to give all our children the future they deserve.

So we began by elevating Native American Affairs within the White House and across the Federal Government. The American people are served by so many dedicated, talented Native Americans like Larry Roberts, our Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Morgan Rodman, our Executive Director of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. Karen Diver and Tracy Goodluck, our Native American Affairs team at the White House. That's just a few. And by creating the White House Council of Native American Affairs, we created a permanent institution with a long-term, Cabinet-level focus on Indian Country, one that involves you through the decisionmaking process.

So I've been proud of what we've been able to do together. We haven't solved every issue. We haven't righted every wrong. But together, we've made significant progress in almost every area.

Together, we've permanently protected sacred lands for future generations. We've restored more than 428,000 acres of tribal homelands to their original owners. By signing the historic *Cobell* settlement into law, we established the Land Buy-Back Program, a \$1.9 billion fund to consolidate individual Indian lands and restore them to Indian—tribal trusts.

Together, we've strengthened your sovereignty, reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act so that tribes can prosecute those who commit domestic violence against women in Indian Country, whether they're Native American or not. We've worked to ensure your right to equal justice under the law and given more power to tribal courts and police. I know that many of you who have come together across tribes and across the country to support the community at Standing Rock. And together, you're making your voices heard.

And in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, we've made a lot of progress for Indian Country over the past 8 years. And this mo-