

We have our divisions, and they are not new. Around-the-clock news cycles and social media sometimes amplify these divisions, and I know we're about to enter a couple of weeks of conventions where our political rhetoric tends to be more overheated than usual.

And that is why it is so important that everyone—regardless of race or political party or profession, regardless of what organizations you are a part of—everyone right now focus on words and actions that can unite this country rather than divide it further. We don't need inflammatory rhetoric. We don't need careless accusations thrown around to score political points or to advance an agenda. We need to temper our words and open our hearts, all of us. We need what we saw in Dallas this week, as a community came together to restore order and deepen unity and understanding. We need the kind of efforts we saw this week in meetings between community leaders and police—some of which I participated in—where I saw people of good will pledge to work together to reduce violence throughout all of our communities. That's what's needed right now. And it is up to all of us to make sure we are part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Someone once wrote, "A bullet need happen only once, but for peace to work, we need to be reminded of its existence again and again."

My fellow Americans, only we can prove, through words and through deeds, that we will not be divided. And we're going to have to

keep on doing it "again and again and again." That's how this country gets united. That's how we bring people of good will together. Only we can prove that we have the grace and the character and the common humanity to end this kind of senseless violence, to reduce fear and mistrust within the American family, to set an example for our children.

And that's who we are, and that's who we always have the capacity to be. And that's the best way for us to honor the sacrifice of the brave police officers who were taken from us this morning.

May God bless them and their families, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ofc. Matthew Gerald and Cpl. Montrell Jackson, Baton Rouge Police Department, and Deputy Brad Garafola, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, who were killed in the shooting in Baton Rouge, LA; Deputies Bruce Simmons and Nicholas Tullier, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, and Ofc. Brad Montgomery, Baton Rouge Police Department, who were injured in the shooting; Gavin Eugene Long, suspected gunman in the shooting; and author Colum McCann. The related proclamation of July 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Shooting of Law Enforcement Officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

July 17, 2016

I condemn, in the strongest sense of the word, the attack on law enforcement in Baton Rouge. For the second time in 2 weeks, police officers who put their lives on the line for ours every day were doing their job when they were killed in a cowardly and reprehensible assault. These are attacks on public servants, on the rule of law, and on civilized society, and they have to stop.

I've offered my full support, and the full support of the Federal Government, to Governor Edwards, Mayor Holden, the Sheriff's Office, and the Baton Rouge Police Department. And make no mistake: Justice will be done.

We may not yet know the motives for this attack, but I want to be clear: there is no justification for violence against law enforcement. None. These attacks are the work of cowards

who speak for no one. They right no wrongs. They advance no causes. The officers in Baton Rouge, the officers in Dallas, they were our fellow Americans, part of our community, part of our country, with people who loved and needed them, and who need us now—all of us—to be at our best.

Today, on the Lord's day, all of us stand united in prayer with the people of Baton Rouge, with the police officers who've been wounded, and with the grieving families of the fallen. May God bless them all.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles July 18, 2016

Good morning, everybody. Please have a seat.

Welcome to the White House. Of all the privileges of this office, none is greater than serving as the Commander in Chief of the finest military that the world has ever known. And of all the military decorations that our Nation can bestow, we have none higher than the Medal of Honor.

As many who know him have said, nobody deserves it more than Charles Kettles of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Many believe that, except for Chuck. *[Laughter]* As he says, this “seems like a hell of a fuss over something that happened 50 years ago.” *[Laughter]*

Even now, all these years later, Chuck is still defined by the humility that shaped him as a soldier. At 86 years old, he still looks sharp as a tack in that uniform. I pointed out, he obviously has not gained any weight. *[Laughter]* And his life is as American as they come. He's the son of an immigrant. His father signed up to fly for the United States the day after Pearl Harbor and filled his five boys with a deep sense of duty to their country. For a time, he even served in the Army Reserve—for a time, even as he served in the Army Reserve, Chuck ran a Ford dealership with his brother. And to families who drove a new car off that lot, he's the salesman who helped put an American icon in their driveway.

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To the aviation students at Eastern Michigan University, Chuck is the professor who taught them about the wonder of flight in the country that invented it. To the constituents he served as a rare Republican in his hometown's mostly Democratic city council—*[laughter]*—Chuck is the public servant who made sure that their voices were heard. And to Ann, his beautiful bride, who grew up literally as the girl next door, Chuck is a devoted husband. Next March they will celebrate their 40th anniversary. So happy early anniversary.

So, in a lot of ways, Chuck Kettles is America. And to the dozens of American soldiers that he saved in Vietnam half a century ago, Chuck is the reason they lived and came home and had children and grandchildren, entire family trees made possible by the actions of this one man.

We are honored to be joined not only by Ann, but also 8 of Chuck and Ann's 10 children, and 3 of their grandchildren. It's the Kettles family reunion here in the White House. *[Laughter]* We're also honored to be joined by Chuck's brothers-in-arms from Vietnam and some of Chuck's newest comrades, members of the Medal of Honor Society.

May 15, 1967, started as a hot Monday morning. Soldiers from the 101st Airborne were battling hundreds of heavily armed North Vietnamese in a rural riverbed. Our men were