

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**Remarks Following a Meeting With Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr., and  
Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh C. Johnson**

*July 19, 2016*

We just had a useful discussion, following up on the Task Force meeting that I had last week, as well as a number of conversations that we've had with various stakeholders in the wake of the tragic events that we've seen over the last couple of weeks.

Obviously, the loss of three more police officers in Baton Rouge over the weekend, three of them still wounded, one critically wounded—and we're praying for him as we speak—right on the heels of Dallas indicates the degree to which it is very important for us to do everything we can to help police officers go home at night and to be safe. And as I said the other night, it's a reminder of the extraordinary risks and dangers that they are taking every single day to protect us and our way of life.

And as has been consistent throughout all the conversations I've had over the last several weeks, I strongly believe that there is no contradiction between us protecting our officers, honoring our officers, making sure that they have all the tools they need to do their job safely, and building trust between police officers and departments in the communities that they serve. In fact, those things are complementary and not contradictory.

And the more we can do to make sure that communities feel that these are their police departments and that they have an interest in protecting them, the easier it's going to be for police officers to do their jobs.

The good news is that, thanks to the leadership of Attorney General Lynch, FBI Director Comey, as well as Secretary Jeh Johnson at DHS, we do have a toolkit of best practices, of training, of resources and equipment that can help police departments protect their officers, make sure that they can do their jobs. But we're going to have to do more than we already are doing.

And some of that is engaging at the local level, because this cannot just be a Federal, top-down initiative, this has to be a local initiative in the 18,000 law enforcement jurisdictions that are out there all across the country. And it also has to be resourced. We were talking—just to give you a few examples—about the great interest on the part of police departments around the country in training for safety, deescalation, dealing with active-shooter cases. Unfortunately, not all those departments that want to train their officers have the resources to do it. And the Justice Department has programs that can be made available, but we don't have enough coverage, not as much as we'd like.

Something as basic as bulletproof vests, large numbers of departments do have bulletproof vests for all their officers on patrol and in situations where there's significant risk, but there are a number of places where they're still short of bulletproof vests. That can make a difference.

And so my intention over the next several months, as long as I'm in this office, is to continue to look at best practices, figure out what's working well; listen to our police departments in how we can help them engage the community, build up trust. What kind of equipment do they need? What kind of training do they need? What kind of recruitment

strategies that—do they need? And then to do everything we can to convene all parties concerned, including Congress, to make sure that they can get those resources.

And we are going to continue, building off the Task Force report and the meeting that we had last week, to encourage the kinds of conversations between police departments and communities so that we can incorporate—as part of a strategy to make the lives of police officers safer—encourage the kind of best practices that assure communities are embracing their police departments the way they should and the way they need to.

So I appreciate the efforts that have already taken place. We've got a lot more work to do. I want to repeat, this is not something that we're going to be able to do solely from this office or from the Justice Department or the FBI or the Department of Homeland Security. This is something that's going to have to be bottom up and not just top down.

But the fact that in the wake of this tragedy, we've seen over the course of several weeks much more constructive conversations and the offering up of very concrete recommendations and suggestions for how we can do better is encouraging to me.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Officer Matthew Gerald and Corporal Montrell Jackson, Baton Rouge Police Department, and Deputy Brad Garafola, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, who were killed in the police shootings in Baton Rouge, LA, on July 17; and Deputies Bruce Simmons and Nicholas Tullier, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, and Officer Brad Montgomery, Baton Rouge Police Department, who were injured in the Baton Rouge shootings.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, meeting; Addresses and Remarks : Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh C. Johnson, meeting; Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr., meeting.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Comey, James B., Jr.; Garafola, Brad; Gerald, Matthew; Jackson, Montrell; Johnson, Jeh C.; Lynch, Loretta E.; Montgomery, Brad; Simmons, Bruce; Tullier, Nicholas.

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