

contrary from the insurance companies and their lobbyists. And remember this endorsement the next time you see a bunch of misleading ads on television.

The AARP knows this bill will make health care more affordable. They know it will make coverage more secure. They know it's a good deal for our seniors. And that's why we're thrilled that they're standing up for this effort.

The same is true for the doctors and medical professionals who are supporting this bill today. These are men and women who know our health care system best and have been watching this debate closely. They would not be supporting it if they really believed that it would lead to Government bureaucrats making decisions that are best left to doctors. They would not be with us if they believed that reform would in any way damage the critical and sacred doctor-patient relationship.

Instead, they're supporting reform because they've seen firsthand what's broken about our health care system. They've seen what happens when patients can't get the care they need because some insurance company has decided to drop their coverage or water it down. They've seen what happens when a patient is forced to pay out-of-pocket costs of thousands of dollars that she doesn't have to

get the treatment she desperately needs. They've seen what happens when patients don't come in for regular checkups or screenings because either their insurance company doesn't cover them or they can't afford health insurance in the first place. And they've seen far, far too much of their time spent filling out forms and haggling with insurance company bureaucrats. So the doctors of America know what needs to be fixed about our health care system. They know that health insurance reform would go a long way toward doing that.

We are closer to passing this reform than ever before. And now that the doctors and medical professionals of America are standing with us, now that the organizations charged with looking out for the interests of seniors are standing with us, we are even closer.

I want to thank both organizations again for their support, and I urge Congress to listen to AARP, listen to the AMA, and pass this reform for hundreds of millions of Americans who will benefit from it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary Robert L. Gibbs.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Seretse Khama Ian Khama of Botswana

November 5, 2009

President Obama. Hello, everybody. I just want to welcome President Khama to the Oval Office and to make a brief statement about Botswana and its relationship to the United States.

Although Botswana is not a large country, it is truly one of the extraordinary success stories in Africa. Since the mid-sixties it has moved on a path of good economic management and outstanding political governance, and as a consequence, you have seen extraordinary improvements in living standards over the last 40 years in Botswana that really are an envy for much of the rest of the continent.

Not only has Botswana shown itself to be an outstanding success, but it's also been a great partner to the United States. And our Governments have cooperated extensively throughout the years. President Khama, I think, has been showing his own extraordinary leadership in helping to move his country forward on a range of issues, from how to deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis, to addressing economic development, to dealing with some of the regional problems that exist. On each of these areas, I think, Botswana has been a real leader.

And so we just want to express our appreciation for the outstanding work that successive Governments in Botswana have been to able

to accomplish. We are grateful for the friendship between the people of the United States and Botswana. And I'm looking forward to continuing that strong partnership in the years to come.

So welcome.

President Khama. Thank you very much. I certainly passed on my appreciation to President Obama for having had the opportunity to meet with him and to share views about the bilateral cooperation that we have had between our two countries: areas on trades, areas on health, and also to share how both countries are tackling this current economic downturn.

And we also had the opportunities to talk about environmental issues, climate change, and the upcoming Copenhagen summit. And lastly, also about regional issues and how we can try and go about entrenching democracy both in the mindset and the way we go about all our activities on the continent, the African Union in particular.

And I would just like to thank you, Mr. President, once again for having given me this opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Thank you very much.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:33 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks at the Closing of the White House Tribal Nations Conference *November 5, 2009*

Please, everybody have a seat. Let me first of all just thank Ken and the entire Department of the Interior staff for organizing just an extraordinary conference. I want to thank my Cabinet members and senior administration officials who participated today. I hear that Dr. Joe Medicine Crow was around, and so I want to give a shout-out to that Congressional Medal of Honor [Presidential Medal of Freedom]^o winner. Good to see you.

My understanding is, is that you had an extremely productive conference. I want to thank all of you for coming and for your efforts, and I want to give you my solemn guarantee that this is not the end of a process but a beginning of a process, and that we are going to follow up. We are going to follow up. Every single member of my team understands that this is a top priority for us. I want you to know that, as I said this morning, this is not something that we just give lip service to. And we are going to keep on working with you to make sure that the first Americans get the best possible chances in life in a way that's consistent with your extraordinary traditions and culture and values.

Shootings at Fort Hood Army Base in Texas

Now, I have to say, though, that beyond that, I had planned to make some broader remarks about the challenges that lay ahead for Native Americans, as well as collaboration with our administration, but as some of you might have heard, there has been a tragic shooting at the Fort Hood Army base in Texas. We don't yet know all the details at this moment; we will share them as we get them. What we do know is that a number of American soldiers have been killed and even more have been wounded in a horrific outburst of violence.

My immediate thoughts and prayers are with the wounded and with the families of the fallen, and with those who live and serve at Fort Hood. And these are men and women who have made the selfless and courageous decision to risk and at times give their lives to protect the rest of us on a daily basis. It's difficult enough when we lose these brave Americans in battles overseas. It is horrifying that they should come under fire at an Army base on American soil.

^o White House correction.