

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 27, 2009

I send my warmest greetings to all those attending Dedication Day to mark the 146th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address.

On a brisk day in November 1863, President Abraham Lincoln stood before a somber crowd in the fields of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Only days before, thousands of bodies from opposing armies had lain side by side in death's repose. This was a moment of solemn reflection, a pause in the internecine conflict to dedicate a cemetery for the Union dead.


It was a period of profound peril for America; our path was uncharted, the fate of our Union uncertain. Governing a house divided, it was the courage of his convictions that saw us through slavery's dark storm. Because of the sacrifice of the soldiers resting here, and that of our beloved Lincoln, our Union stands indivisible since the time the Great Emancipator said it was so.

Today, we stand at another critical juncture. We are engaged in two wars and a battle against terrorism. Our workers are idled by recession. The community of nations struggles with climate change, nuclear proliferation, pandemics, and other challenges which defy national boundaries and simple solutions.

With each step we take together along this unfamiliar path, we recall the President whose moral compass pointed firm and true. We remember how deeply he believed in the American spirit, placing no limits on the heights our country might reach.

As we forge ahead, we hear his call, asking us to make common cause with our brothers and sisters; to face our challenges with optimism and vigor; to seek our shared destiny; and to secure the blessings of liberty for generations to come.

God bless you all, God bless the fallen who consecrate this ground, and God bless the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style. The signature is centered at the bottom of the page.