

# Obama's Frightening Insensitivity Following Shooting

**A bad week for Democrats compounded by an awful moment for Barack Obama.**

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[President Obama](#) didn't wait long after Tuesday's devastating elections to give critics another reason to question his leadership, but this time the subject matter was more grim than a pair of governorships.

After news broke out of the shooting at the [Fort Hood](#) Army post in Texas, the nation watched in horror as the toll of dead and injured climbed. [The White House](#) was notified immediately and by late afternoon, word went out that the president would speak about the incident prior to a previously scheduled appearance. At about 5 p.m., cable

stations went to the president. The situation called for not only his trademark eloquence, but also grace and perspective.

But instead of a somber chief executive offering reassuring words and expressions of sympathy and compassion, viewers saw a wildly disconnected and inappropriately light president [making introductory remarks](#). At the event, a Tribal Nations Conference hosted by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian affairs, the president thanked various staffers and offered a "shout-out" to "Dr. Joe Medicine Crow -- that Congressional Medal of Honor winner." Three minutes in, the president spoke about the shooting, in measured and appropriate terms. Who is advising him?

*Anyone* at home aware of the major news story of the previous hours had to have been stunned. An incident like this requires a scrapping of the early light banter. The resident should apologize for the tone of his remarks, explain what happened, express sympathy for those has slain and appeal for calm and patience until all the facts are in. That's the *least* that should occur.

Indeed, an argument could be made that Obama should have canceled the Indian event, out of respect for people having been murdered at an Army post a few hours before. That would have prevented any sort of jarring emotional switch at the event.

Did the president's team not realize what sort of image they were presenting to the country at this moment? The disconnect between what Americans at home knew had been going on -- and the initial words coming out of their president's mouth was jolting, if not disturbing.

It must have been disappointing for many politically aware [Democrats](#), still reeling from the election two days before. The New Jersey gubernatorial vote had already demonstrated that the president and his political team couldn't produce a winning outcome in a state very friendly to Democrats (and where the president won by 15 points one year ago). And now this? Congressional Democrats must wonder if a

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White House that has burdened them with a too-heavy policy agenda over the last year has a strong enough political operation to help push that agenda through.

If the president's communications apparatus can't inform -- and protect -- their boss during tense moments when the country needs to see a focused commander-in-chief and a compassionate head of state, it has disastrous consequences for that president's party and supporters.

All the president's men (and women) fell down on the job Thursday. And Democrats across the country have real reason to panic.