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President Barack Obama calls on Americans to find common ground in support of racial equity and justice at a memorial Tuesday in Dallas for the five police officers killed last week in an apparent revenge killing during a protest of police killings of black men in Louisiana and Minnesota.

# Finding Common Ground

(AP) — At a memorial for slain police officers, President Barack Obama declared Tuesday that a week of deeply troubling violence has seemed to expose “the deepest fault lines of our democracy.” But he insisted the nation is not as divided as it seems and called on Americans to find common ground in support of racial equity and justice.

Obama acknowledged that Americans are unsettled by another mass shooting and are seeking answers to the violence that has sparked protests in cities and highlighted the nation’s persistent racial divide.

Five Dallas officers were killed last Thursday while standing guard as hundreds of people protested the police killings of black men in Louisiana and Minnesota earlier in the week.

“It’s hard not to think sometimes that the center might not hold, that things might get

## Obama pays tribute to officers; calls for racial healing

worse,” Obama said. “We must reject such despair.”

He joined politicians, police officers and families of the fallen in the wake of the shocking slayings by a black man who said he wanted revenge for the killings of blacks by police.

“The soul of our city was pierced,” Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings said as he welcomed Obama to the memorial service. It was organized to help combat “a common disease” of violence and honor those who fight it, “our men and women in blue, our peacemakers in blue.”

Rawlings spoke steps from five empty

chairs and portraits of the dead officers.

A call for national unity and solidarity was reinforced by several speakers at the interfaith service, including former President George W. Bush, a Dallas resident, who attended with his wife, Laura.

“At times it feels like the forces pulling us apart are stronger than the forces binding us together,” Bush said. “Too often we judge other groups by their worst examples, while judging ourselves by our best intentions. And this has strained our bonds of understanding and common purpose.”

“We want the unity of hope, affection and higher purpose,” he said.

Obama has denounced the shooting as a “vicious, calculated and despicable attack on law enforcement” by a “demented” individual. And he has argued that, despite the heated public outcry of the past week, the country is not as divided as it may seem.

Obama’s choice of traveling companions underscored the theme. Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of California joined Obama on Air Force One for the flight to Dallas. Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas spoke at the service but did not travel with the president. He said the attack was deeply personal.

“Being a Texan doesn’t describe where you’re from, it describes who your family is,” the senator said.

The White House said the president worked late into the night writing his speech and consulting scripture for inspiration.