

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

The President's Weekly Address

December 24, 2011

The President. Hi everyone. As you gather with family and friends this weekend, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I, and of course Bo, want to wish you all merry Christmas and happy holidays.

The First Lady. This is such a wonderful time of year. It's a time to honor the story of love and redemption that began 2,000 years ago, a time to see the world through a child's eyes and rediscover the magic all around us, and a time to give thanks for the gifts that bless us every single day.

This holiday season at the White House, we wanted to show our thanks with a very special holiday tribute to some of the strongest, bravest, and most resilient members of our American family, the men and women who wear our country's uniform and the families who support them.

The President. For many military families, the best gift this year is a simple one: welcoming a loved one back for the holidays. You see, after nearly 9 years, our war in Iraq is over. Our troops are coming home, and across America, military families are being reunited.

So let's take a moment to give thanks for their service, for their families' service, for our veterans' service. And let's say a prayer for all our troops standing post all over the world, especially our brave men and women who are in Afghanistan and serving, even as we speak, in harm's way to protect the freedoms and security we hold so dear.

The First Lady. Our veterans, troops, and military families sacrifice so much for us. So this holiday season, let's make sure that all of them know just how much we appreciate everything they do.

Let's ask ourselves, "How can I give back? How can my family serve them as well as they've served us?" And one way you can get started is to visit joiningforces.gov to find out how you can get involved right in your own community.

The President. Giving of ourselves, service to others, that's what this season is all about. For my family and millions of Americans, that's what Christmas is all about. It reminds us that part of what it means to love God is to love one another—to be our brother's keeper and our sister's keeper. But that belief is not just at the center of our Christian faith, it's shared by Americans of all faiths and backgrounds. It's why so many of us, every year, volunteer our time to help those most in need, especially our hungry and our homeless.

So whatever you believe, wherever you're from, let's remember the spirit of service that connects us all to this season as Americans. Each of us can do our part to serve our communities and our country, not just today, but every day.

The First Lady. So from our family to yours, merry Christmas.

The President. Merry Christmas, happy holidays, happy new year, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 16 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 24. The transcript was made available

by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 24.

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