

The President's Weekly Address

December 13, 2014

Hi, everybody. It's the holidays, a season to give thanks for our many blessings: the love of family, the joy of good friends, the bonds of community, the freedom we cherish as Americans, the peace and justice we seek in the world.

As we go about our days, as we gather with loved ones and friends, it's important to remember: Our way of life—the freedom, prosperity and security that we enjoy as Americans—is not a gift that is simply handed to us. It has to be earned, by every generation. And no one sacrifices more to preserve our blessings than our extraordinary men and women in uniform.

That's why, on Monday, I'll be visiting our troops at Joint Base McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst in New Jersey, to salute them for their service and thank them for their sacrifices. Since our nation was attacked on 9/11, these men and women, like so many others in uniform, have met every mission we've asked of them. They deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. In more than a decade of war, this 9/11 generation has worked with the Afghan people to help them reclaim their communities and prevent terrorist attacks against our own country.

Now, many of our troops are returning from Afghanistan, and on Monday, I'll be proud to help welcome them home. That's because, this month, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. Our war in Afghanistan is coming to a responsible end.

Of course, the end of our combat mission in Afghanistan doesn't mean the end of challenges to our security. We'll continue to work with Afghans to make sure their country is stable and secure and is never again used to launch attacks against America. The troops I'll visit on Monday have been part of our mission to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL in Iraq and Syria. They've been supporting our efforts in West Africa to fight the Ebola epidemic and save lives. Because in time of crisis and challenge, the world turns to America for leadership. And when the world calls on America, we call on the brave men and women of our armed forces to do what no one else can.

So this holiday season, as we give thanks for the blessings in our own lives, let's also give thanks to our men and women in uniform who make those blessings possible. Even as some are coming home for the holidays, many more will be far from their families, who sacrifice along with them.

There are so many ways we can express our gratitude to our troops, their families and our veterans. Everyone can do something. To find out what you can do, just go to joiningforces.gov. As a nation, as Americans, let's always keep striving to serve them as well as they have always served us.

Thank you, have a great weekend, and God bless our troops and their families.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:40 p.m. on December 12 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 13. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 13.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Subjects: Afghanistan : Security cooperation with U.S.; Afghanistan : U.S. assistance; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Africa : West Africa, Ebola epidemic, response and containment efforts; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Iraq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; New Jersey : Joint Base McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : September 11, 2001, attacks.

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