

*President Karzai.* Most welcome, most welcome. Take care. Thanks very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 7:53 a.m. at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David D. McKiernan, USA, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Af-

ghanistan; former President Pervez Musharraf and President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan; and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who was killed in a suicide attack in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on December 27, 2007. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this press conference.

## Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah December 15, 2008

Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. You may have heard I've had a pretty eventful weekend. [*Laughter*]

So I slipped out Saturday night to Andrews Air Force Base, boarded Air Force One, and landed in Baghdad, Iraq, on Sunday afternoon. It was an unbelievable experience—it really was—to stand next to the President of a democracy and hold my hand over my heart as they played the national anthem in front of one of Saddam Hussein's palaces. I then had—[*applause*]. And then I had the honor to thank our brave troops who have helped make the transformation in Iraq possible.

This morning we landed in Afghanistan. I spoke to American forces serving courageously to make sure that Afghanistan never becomes a safe haven from which the killers could launch attacks on the homeland.

And then I met with President Karzai, who is determined to help the young democracy survive. And so he said, "Why don't you hang around for a while?" And I said, "Well, you don't understand. [*Laughter*] I need to get back to the White House for an important event." [*Laughter*] The Hanukkah reception is always one of the most special events of the season. Laura and I are pleased to be with so many friends. And we are honored to gather with leaders of the Jewish community to cele-

brate our final Hanukkah here in the White House.

I want to thank our Attorney General for joining us. General, I appreciate you and Susan joining us. I am proud to be here with one of America's great United States Senators, Joe Lieberman—[*applause*—his greatness made possible by his wife Hadassah, I might add. [*Laughter*] And one of the young leaders of the United States Congress, Eric Cantor, and his wife Diana. And we're proud to be here with Kol Zimra as well, who will perform later.

The story of Hanukkah recalls the miraculous victory of a small band of patriots against tyranny and the oil that burned for eight nights. Through centuries of exile and persecution, Jews have lit the menorah. Each year, they behold its glow with faith in the power of God and love for His greatest gift, freedom.

This Hanukkah we celebrate another miraculous victory, the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. When President Harry Truman led the world in recognizing Israel in May of 1948, many wondered whether the small nation could possibly survive. Yet from the first days of independence, the people of Israel defied dire predictions. With determination and hard work, they turned a rocky desert into fertile soil. They built a thriving democracy, a strong economy, and one of the mightiest

military forces on Earth. Like the Macabees, Israel has defended itself bravely against enemies seeking its destruction. And today, Israel is a light unto the nations and one of America's closest friends.

This evening we have the great privilege of celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary and Hanukkah in a very special way. Thanks to the generosity of the Truman Library, we are fortunate to light the menorah presented to President Truman in 1951 as a symbol of friendship by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion.

A decade after President Truman received this gift, he visited Prime Minister Ben-Gurion for one of the last times. As they parted, Ben-Gurion told the President that as a foreigner he could not judge President Truman's place in American history, but the President's courageous decision to recognize the new State of Israel gave him an immortal place in Jewish his-

tory. Those words filled the President's eyes with uncharacteristic tears. And later, Ben-Gurion would say he rarely had seen somebody so moved.

And so tonight I'm deeply moved to welcome the grandsons of these two great men—Clifton Truman Daniel and Yariv Ben-Eliezer—to light the Truman menorah together.

Laura and I wish all the people of Jewish faith a happy Hanukkah and many joyous Hanukkahs in the years ahead. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jalal Talabani of Iraq; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Susan Mukasey, wife of Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey; and entertainers Kol Zimra. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador

December 16, 2008

*President Bush.* Mr. President, *benvenido de nuevo*. I am honored to have you back. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate your strong leadership for the people of our close ally, El Salvador.

We've had a very good discussion. First, I want to thank you for your support of freedom in Iraq. You and—have been steadfast in recognizing that freedom is the way to help build lasting peace.

I appreciate very much the fact that your country is a vibrant democracy. You've been steadfast in your support for your—the right of your people to express themselves in a free society, and I applaud you for that strength.

I want to thank you very much for investing in your people. You're a—we've got a partnership through the Millennium

Challenge Corporation. And part of your commitment was honest government and the investment in the health and education of your people. And you've honored that agreement. I thank you very much for understanding that the benefits of trade are good for your people and our people as well. And you're a very strong advocate of CAFTA, which is working very well.

And finally, you've been very strong when it comes to helping interdict the flow of drugs. I explained to the President that since 2001, drug use in the United States amongst teenagers has declined by 25 percent. And the reason I said that is because in order to affect the flow of drugs there must be a comprehensive approach. First of all, we got to—we in the United States must reduce demand. But it also requires